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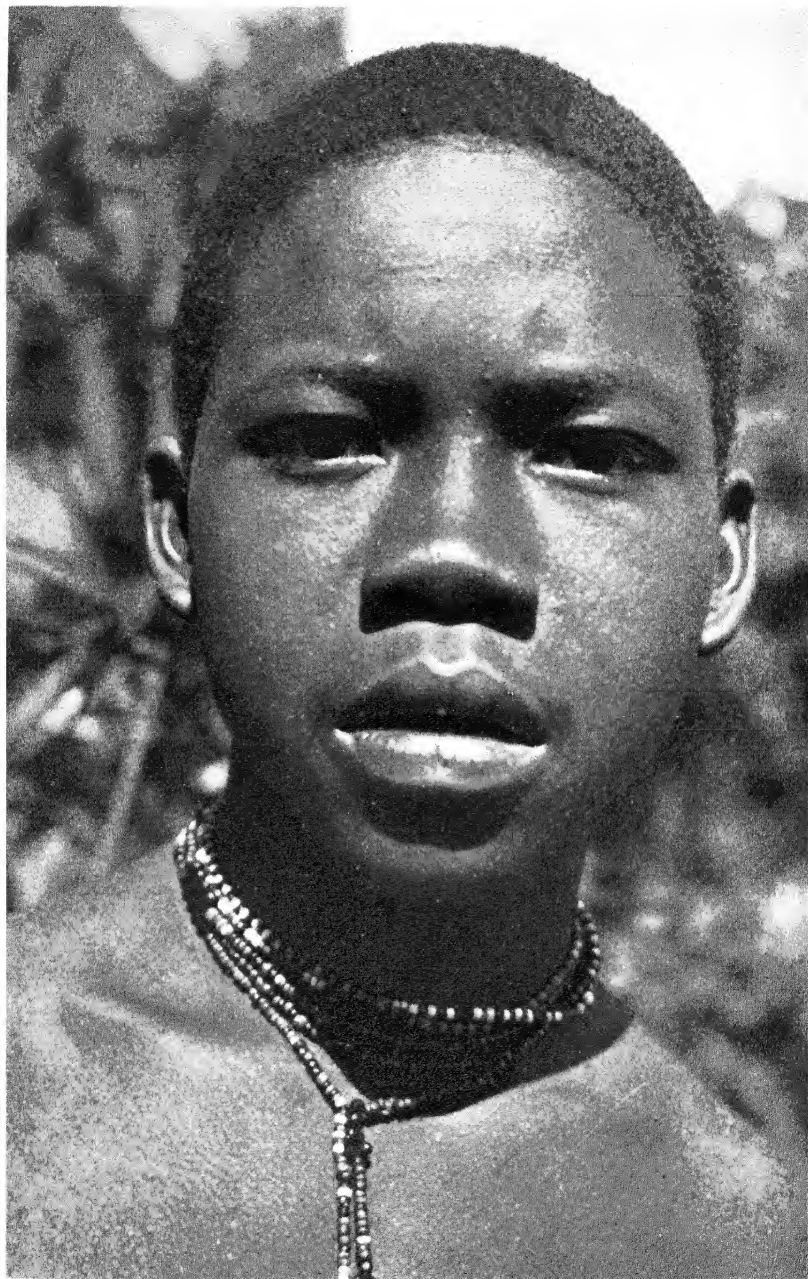
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AMONG THE FOREST  
DWARFS OF MALAYA







SEMAMBU, A YOUTH OF ABOUT EIGHTEEN

*Frontispiece*



# AMONG THE FOREST DWARFS OF MALAYA

By PAUL SCHEBESTA

*TRANSLATED*

*By ARTHUR CHAMBERS*

WITH 142 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR,  
AND A MAP

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# AMONG THE FOREST DWARFS OF MALAYA

## I

### THE COUNTRY AND ITS INHABITANTS

**D**WARF peoples still exist as scattered relics of by-gone ages in almost every part of the world. We find them in Central Africa, the Andaman Islands, and the Malay Peninsula in Further India. I lived for many months among those of Malaya, was their guest and travelling companion on their journeys through the forest, shared their hard lot, and gained a deep insight into their psychology. It is of this people that this book tells, and of their home, the towering, dark primeval forest.

Malacca, now commonly known as Malaya, is a long, narrow peninsula reaching from the mainland of Further India to Sumatra. Its greatest breadth is about 220 kilometres.

Malaya is an evergreen Paradise. Its climate is tropical, for it lies near the equator. Damp heat broods over the country the long day through, and at morning banks of mist rise and swathe the land in a sea of cloud. Not until about ten o'clock does the sun pierce the dense veil. The water which during the morning has risen skyward as mist comes down during the afternoon as thunder rain. The mean rainfall is very high, particularly in the mountains.

Running lengthways through the middle of the peninsula are high, forest-covered mountain chains. Here eternal silence reigns, only broken in the morning hours by the shrill cry of the siamang apes as the rising sun touches the

crests of the forest giants. From time to time also there rolls the muffled growl of the royal tiger as, conscious of his prestige, he stalks slowly and majestically through the forest warning all living creatures of his approach.

In the eternal gloom of the forest the clear mountain streams murmur, the lovely orchids bloom. Giant trees, fifty to sixty metres high, stretch their arms over their slighter younger brothers who, for lack of light and air, have only been able to reach half their height. Thorny undergrowth covers the damp ground sunk in constant darkness. No warming sun-beam ever penetrates to these depths save when some decayed monster tree collapses and in his fall brings down everything around him. Lianas climb the trunks, coiling themselves from one to the other until at last with Judas kiss they suck out the tree's very life. Majestic cathedrals of bamboo tower in tremendous arches strangling all that grows beneath.

In this wonderful silence of the primeval forest, in this tangle of thorny undergrowth, liana and reed, wanders with inaudible tread the Orang-Utan, the dwarf man, the riddle of the ages. Here is his home, here he is lord ; the densest shadows of the forest are congenial to him ; he shuns the sun because it hurts him.

Hither neither cunning Malay nor greedy Chinaman, nor yet the ruthless European have followed him, though these three have already driven him from the borders of his home and are ever pressing him further into the interior. The filched territory they have turned to cornland, or, in the service of insatiable Mammon, planted with rubber or riddled with tin mines ; railways and modern roads stretch along the coast areas they have taken over, thousands of cars hurtle through them in the relentless struggle of commerce. The forest bordering these roads lowers darkly upon this strange picture and the Orang-Utan peers shyly through the branches. Deep distress fills his heart at this wanton disturbance of the peace of his home.

Malaya is named after its inhabitant, the Malay, which might

make it appear to be the country of his origin. This, however, is as little true of the Malay as of the Chinese or the Tamuls from Further India, who are also settled there in great numbers. It is only a few centuries since the Malay first penetrated into the country and took it for his own. From that time, and not before, it has taken the name "Tanah Malayu"—Malay Land. In name the Malays, but in actual fact the English, are masters of the land.

Malaya is the home of the Orang-Utan, who are divided into three different races. The youngest are the Jakudn in the south of the peninsula, Malay-like, heathen stock who are not under the influence of Hinduism and Mohammedanism, like their Malay cousins.

The second stock, who occupy the centre of the peninsula, appears in distant ages to have changed its home in the far east for the mountainous regions of Malaya. These are the Sakai, a strange, enigmatical, and primitive race.

No account, however, will be given in this report of either of these two stocks, nor of the Chinese and Tamuls who to-day form the majority of the inhabitants of Malaya. This book is dedicated to the most remarkable dwellers upon this tongue of land, the dwarf tribes, who are at the same time the original occupants of the land.

The people living around them relate among themselves very extraordinary things about these tribes, but always in whispers, lest a dwarf hear. The story goes that they are not men at all, for they suddenly bob up out of the ground in the most unexpected places ; that they have glowing eyes, are ignorant of the use of fire, and eat everything raw.

These legendary forest dwarfs were my friends for many months. I was successful, and I may claim to be the first white man to succeed to the same extent, in winning their confidence. They were my companions and guides in the dark forests. In their company I repeatedly crossed the central mountain ranges and wandered from one coast to the other. My life was surrendered into their hands, for, apart

from one Malay servant, there was no one with me. I was always in the best of company, and better looked after than in civilized Europe, leaving out of account the dangers from wild animals and the climate ; against these even the solicitude of the dwarfs could not protect me.

I have crossed stretches of country which no European foot had yet trodden, visited tribes which had never before seen a white man. A false step in the mountain gorges of the interior, an accident during the many journeys by raft in the terrifying rapids of the mountain rivers, the spring of a tiger in the darkness of the night while the little caravan bivouacked in the open forest, an attack from a band of Malay marauders, or the many tropical diseases—how often such dangers might have cost my life. I was well aware of this, but strangely enough I never felt fear so long as I was in the forest. Once back at the coast, however, to renew supplies, my nerves would give way, and ghastly dreams bore witness to the excited state of my imagination.

The chief difficulty of my task lay in having to adapt my mode of life to that of these people. Investigators among other peoples have had a lighter. They have been able to make for a definite place and settle themselves in, with men always at hand. With me it was otherwise, for the Orang-Utan are nomads. They have no fixed abode, but wander indefinitely hither and thither in the forests. The investigator must therefore attach himself to them if his work is to be thorough. And so I was condemned hardly ever to have even a passable shelter, and much less was there any question of being comfortably equipped. I could only take essentials with me, and the first claim was for the objects required for my investigations.

My caravan usually consisted of five or six men. The few bearers were soon so heavily loaded that I could only pack for myself the most important things in the way of clothing, a light mattress, and a blanket. At times I slept on the bare earth.

True, I should have been able to make myself more comfortable if I had taken more bearers, but the little negro groups in the interior from whose midst I selected these could not as a rule provide more, and to have travelled with a large number of Malays would have jeopardized the success of my undertaking. The dwarfs hold aloof from any large number of strangers, for they are extraordinarily shy. I think I am hitting the nail on the head when I say that the secret of the success of my journeys lay in my simple and unassuming mode of approach. Upon other peoples a great impression is made by a lavish outlay, pomp, and overbearing behaviour; not so with those true children of the wilderness, the Orang-Utan of Malaya.

I call the inland tribes Orang-Utan, the name by which they are generally known over there. Orang-Utan means "Forest Man," as opposed to the Orang-Kampong or "Village Man." The "Village Men," however, are the Malays, who live in villages in the open country, whereas the dwarfs prefer the darkness of the forest. Ethnologically the dwarf tribes of Malaya are known by the name Semang. The Semang are dwarfs; not goblins with pointed cap and long beard, such as we know in fairy tales, but dwarfs in the anthropological sense. On account of their affinity with the negroes they are also called negritos, "little negroes."

The total number of all Semang I should put down at about two thousand, and these again are divided into various stocks speaking different languages or dialects.

The most northerly group are the Tonga, or Mos (numbering about 100) in the Siamese area of Patalung-Trang. They live separated from the main family of negritos which has its home in Malaya itself. To these belong :

The Kensiu (about 200) in the province of Kedah and Patani which borders it;

The Kenta (about 130), including the Kenta Bogn (61) in Kedah and northern Perak;

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The Jahai (about 800) in the provinces of north-eastern Perak and western Kelantan ;

The Menri (about 400) in south-eastern Kelantan and northern Pahang.

Groups separated from the main stock are the Batek, Nogn, Kleb, Temo (about 100) in central and eastern Pahang. Finally must be mentioned the Sabubn, who are physiologically and culturally negrito, but in language belong to the Sakai (about 250).

The Semang are dying out ; nevertheless, they are numerically stronger and physically tougher than has hitherto been supposed. A great dearth of women is making itself felt in their ranks and the vices of the cultured races are gaining a hold on them, especially opium-smoking. Syphilis is, as far as I know, unknown among them. European civilisation is digging the grave of the dwarfs of Malaya as it presses further into the interior, thrusting the Malays before it and crowding the nomadic Semang into an area too confined for them where they are being economically smothered.

There was imminent danger that these peculiar tribes, to which during recent decades particular attention had been drawn by science, might die out without being thoroughly studied. An expedition of investigation was therefore equipped and sent to Malaya. Years before, Professor Dr. W. Schmidt had called for investigation of the dwarf peoples, but the turmoil of the war and the years following it, and the universal hardship they involved, seemed to stultify the plan, until the present Pope, Pius XI, magnanimously financed the undertaking and made it possible to complete the preparations by the end of 1923. The whole expedition lasted from January 1924 to September 1925. Of this time the year 1924 was entirely devoted to study of the Semang. To all who supported the undertaking with their help, including Messrs. O. Blagden and W. Skeat, the missionaries of the Paris Seminary, especially the Rev. Père Pagès, Rev. Père

Cardon, Rev. Père Fourghs, as also to Mr. Evans, director of the museum of Kuala Lumpur, I wish to express my thanks here.

The British Colonial Office and, under its instructions, the Government of the Federated Malay States, have also honoured me with generous assistance, for which I thank them. Particularly energetic support was also given to me by Captain J. Berkeley; to him and to Père Cardon I certainly owe part of my success.

I will repeat here that this book deals only with the Semang, not with the other tribes of the interior, the Sakai and Jakudn, to which I was able to devote several months of my investigations. An account of these will appear later.

.

»

## II

### FIRST ATTEMPT TO PENETRATE INTO THE INTERIOR

**D**URING a month's stay on the coast of Malaya in that paradise, Pulau Pinang, I had acquired a fair knowledge of the Malay language and made good friends. Both these achievements proved of extraordinary value later. Now the moment seemed to me to have come to venture upon the first step into the forests. None of my acquaintances in Pinang could give me precise information about the routes through the mountainous, densely-wooded interior beyond the narrow waterway that separates the peninsula from Pulau Pinang. They had, however, smoothed the way for me in so far as to refer me to Father Cardon, a missionary in Taiping, in whose district the Orang-Utan I wished to study were sojourning. Père Cardon had already been informed by letter, and most kindly came over in person to offer me his help. So I set out for Taiping and was for two days his guest.

With his help I bought the necessary supplies for an excursion into the interior. The goal was Grik, the most advanced Government post in the province of Perak. Père Cardon here had a good friend, District Officer Captain J. Berkeley, from whom I promised myself great help for my undertaking.

Grik lies 80 miles east of Taiping, a road only a few years old connecting the two places. As the British Government devotes everywhere great care to the laying of roads, all those in Malaya can be comfortably travelled by car.

Père Cardon was my companion on this journey into the interior. Personally I was still travelling like a man in a dream, as everything was so strange and foreign to me. The



many changing impressions allowed my mind no time for peaceful reflection. It was only a reconnoitring expedition that I had in mind. I wanted to discover where my researches on the peninsula might begin.

With loud tooting the hired car dashed along the up-to-date local roads. Taiping looks like a small town of villas. It lies in a circular hollow bounded by the semicircle of mountains whose crests break the rain clouds. The rainfall therefore is particularly heavy. Taiping is a pretty little town nestling in green, but not greatly to be recommended for a prolonged stay on account of its humid climate.

Outside the town we saw a few Englishmen busy working the dredging machines and supervising the Chinese coolies at the tin mines. In the open country the route lay along rice fields stretching as far as the eye could see, until we ran into rubber plantations alternating with Malay villages. In the shade of high cocoanut palms and other fruit trees the thin-walled Malay huts with their betel-chewing inhabitants drowsed. Cars and ox-waggon met and passed us. The gaily-dressed pedestrians drew timidly to the extreme edge of the way or dodged frightened into the woods.

Our car turned from the high road connecting Taiping with Kuala Kangsar to the narrower by-road to the left. Dense rubber plantations for a long time hid from us the view of the mountains, whose jagged rocks had hitherto delighted our eyes. Laboriously we wound our way up and down until at last we reached the plain of Lenggong, where we halted for an hour.

We had covered about 40 miles. While we were resting, the local Malays told us about the Orang-Utan dwelling in the surrounding forests. Lenggong, indeed, is the first point inland where the dwarfs still live. Once they extended nearer to the coast. All over the peninsula they are known to the Malays as Sakai. For the present we had reluctantly to refuse the invitation to visit their encampment as we were expected in Grik at midday.

At Lenggong the mountain wilderness begins. The rubber plantations lay behind us, the Malay settlements grew rarer. On either side of the road stood dark forests. The way climbs up the pass in sharp curves, and an enchanting view is displayed to the astonished eye. Along the mountain precipices the mist trailed in long streams revealing the twistings of the Perak. The sun flooded mountain and forest in a sea of vivid light.

From one height whose slopes were being stripped for another rubber plantation a single tree waved to us, the last sign of cultivation.

Mountain ridges loom before our eyes. Dense forest hems in the road on either side. Many-hued butterflies dance before our path. The forest giants in the strangle grip of creepers and parasitic plants stretch supplicating arms towards us. Mountain streams rush gurgling down the slopes and work their way under the road. The car rushes jolting over crude plank bridges. Thus we zigzag up and down, hurled roughly from side to side in our seats and holding tight at the corners to avoid being thrown out. Two huge elephants carrying their drivers on their necks are coming towards us. We can hear the hollow sound of the wooden neck-bells they carry. Reluctantly the chauffeur draws up to let the giants pass, for even slight contact with the animals might have disastrous consequences for the car. We look admiringly after the elephants, which are unusually big ones.

Repeatedly we draw so close to the Perak river that we can hear the rush of its stream, and now and again its silvery waters glisten through the undergrowth. A snake, trying to cross the road, is caught and mangled in the wheels; a gruesome sight.

Once more the country opens out and we run into Grik. From the distance we are greeted by two mountain pyramids in the north-west, a twin pair, the Këndrong and Kërunai, which we shall come across later in the legends and stories of the Semang. A turn to the left and we enter the Downing

Street of Grik. Passing the police-station and town hall we hurry towards the Residency.

A shady fruit garden surrounds the bungalow of the District Officer, J. Berkeley, whose guests we are to be for the next few days. Three laughing Malay maids sweep the door wide open for us to enter. A "*Tabek tuan!*" and energetic waving of brightly coloured cloths is their warm cheerful welcome.

Captain Berkeley was the only white man on a friendly footing with the Semang. The welfare of his subjects, whether Malay or Orang-Utan, was very close to his heart; indeed much more than the grasping European civilisation which was already stretching its clutches towards the interior. Berkeley opposed this plundering spirit with determination, and kept a special eye upon the inland tribes, whom he would not allow on any consideration to be victimised. No wonder that he was honoured as a father by the Malays and Semang. This attitude found spontaneous expression in the words of a Semang group to Père Cardon: "*Kita kěchil besar, mudah tuba, kita semua dia punya anak; dia, kita punya bapa*" (Small and big, young and old, we all are his children, and he is the father of us all.)

It was therefore a great piece of good fortune for me to be introduced to the children of the wilderness by this "father" of the Negritos. I listened eagerly to his suggestions and rules of conduct, for he had forty years' experience of relations with these shy forest folk. "Above all, don't be too abrupt with them," he repeated again and again. "They can't stand a gruff word and sense evil in every unfriendly gesture." Moreover, he was surprised that we had not fallen in with any Semang group on our way, as they use the road between Lenggong and Grik almost daily.

In the late afternoon he invited us on an excursion to a Semang encampment. He had heard that a group had arrived at a camp in the bush not far from Grik, and hastened to make us acquainted with them.

About a mile from Grik, on the road by which we had come,

the car drew up before a Malay hut. During the drive we had already seen on the road a dirty, black figure which I had recognised as a Semang, though up to then I had never seen one. The man was walking cheerfully along the road barefoot, with that heavy stride which I frequently observed later among the Semang when they are moving slowly. His body was short ; his legs, on the other hand, long ; one arm dangled full length down his side, while the other held the blow-pipe which rested over his shoulder. Round his loins fluttered a piece of cloth. A thick reed hung at his side : the quiver with the poisoned darts.

That was my first Semang, a picture that stamped itself deep upon my memory. The sight filled me with such enthusiasm that I should have liked to run after the man to get a closer view, had not Captain Berkeley assured me that we should soon see many of them.

The car drove up to the very door, so to speak, of the Semang. Leaning against the hut before which we drew up stood dark figures with woolly hair. They stared at us blankly without taking a step either forwards or backwards. No sign of pleasure or fear was visible. Their large eyes hung fixedly upon us until the Captain went up to them and handed them a gift of a pouch of tobacco. They accepted the gift without a word of thanks. The Semang is, according to our ideas, an ill-mannered fellow. He gives no greeting or thanks. Yet I believe that a feeling of gratitude and affection does warm his heart when anyone is kind to him. He is, however, too awkward to express his sentiments in words or signs. His keen eye enables him to distinguish between the friendly disposed and the hostile, and he regulates his attitude to strangers accordingly.

At once they led us into the encampment, two boys hurrying on ahead. Like monkeys they ran over two poles thrown across a marshy stream. We followed.

As we approached, a rustling in the bush betrayed that the inhabitants of the camp were making off. Reassuring cries

from our guides held back the more courageous, including two women. These were squatting under a shelter and stared at us dumb and nonplussed.

The camp, with its few inhabitants, looked dirty but not repellent. It lay close to a rice field in the shade of the undergrowth. I glanced hastily here and there under the shelters. My companions had meanwhile made their way to a warm spring in the neighbourhood. Surrounded by the Semang, I looked at their gear which they showed me. Chiefly I admired the bamboo blow-pipes and quivers. All of them had ornamental designs scratched upon them, giving them an attractive appearance.

I felt a great desire to buy the things. Although the owners were not averse to selling, they asked me to wait until later, to give them time to replace their property. They explained that they were not themselves able to make blow-pipes and quivers. I found out later that this was only an excuse.

Meanwhile the man I had seen on the road entered the camp. It was Puchok, the oldest of the group and their leader. At my request he shot a dart into the forest undergrowth. It made a whirring sound as it passed through the air. The blow-pipe is always loaded as soon as the Semang sets out. I took the weapon in my hand and loaded it under Puchok's guidance. Meanwhile Berkeley arranged with the men for an excursion the next morning. Five declared themselves ready to accompany us to a distant encampment. The captain bestowed a further gift of tobacco upon the camp, while I distributed a little small change. Nevertheless I believe that I was myself more pleased than any of the recipients of gifts. One man ran after me and begged money as payment for the morrow's journey, saying he wanted to buy food. He too at once received what he asked for.

Two half-grown girls met us on the narrow footpath on our way back to the car. They drew back timidly into the bushes before the white men. These two I presented with a few coins as I wished to leave a good impression in the camp.

## 24 AMONG THE FOREST DWARFS OF MALAYA

I was heartily pleased with this preliminary taste of my acquaintanceship with the dwarfs. True, I had made no discoveries, but I prized these first links the more highly because I had heard on all sides of the extraordinary shyness of the forest dwellers.

I had, of course, obtained only a very superficial idea of the Semang and their mode of life. The people of the encampment called themselves, not Semang, but Orang-Jëram, "People of the waterfalls." The colour of their skin varied between chocolate-brown and dirty black. In height only a few stood above my shoulder.

Next morning Père Cardon and I, all ready for the march, waited for our guides and companions. For a long time we watched in vain. In the end a Malay appeared with the unexpected news that the Semang had left the encampment over night and fled, no one knew whither, into the forest.

It is necessary to know the timid nature of these people more intimately, as I did after some months, to understand and excuse their conduct. At that time I was unable to, so that my anger was understandable. The dwarfs had, as a matter of fact, learnt that we were to make the journey without the Resident, in whom they had complete trust. Of us strangers they were afraid: they thought we might cut their heads off. One can imagine the scene in the encampment after our departure, as the people discussed the pros and cons of the expedition. Later I repeatedly assisted at similar debates.

The Semang do not sit down together round a fire for discussion; each squats or lies under his shelter by the blazing fire and gives his opinion in a loud voice. Thereupon each replies according to his insight and age in a voice equally loud. So it goes on for hours until one opinion has finally supervened. That evening the Orang-Jëram had decided to flee in spite of risking the favour of their ruler. It must have been a weighty reason that induced them to take this step. The incident, moreover, shows very clearly how timid they are.

In a moment my high hopes had collapsed to nothing.

Father Cardon went off to hunt butterflies. With a heavy heart I made my way alone to the Semang encampment.

As I was approaching the camp beyond the marshy streams, a thin column of smoke rising from its midst attracted my attention. I glided softly up to it and with beating heart peeped under the shelters. An Orang-Utan looked up at me in amazement. It was Puchok. In silence I squatted down beside him and looked at him. He was busy cooking. A green bamboo reed about half a metre long lay diagonally over the fire. Steam was rising from the hollow of the cane from which the tip of a banana leaf protruded. With his bush-knife, which he drew from his girdle, he split open the charred bamboo and a green sausage lay before him. This he unfolded over some leaves spread on the ground, and there appeared a heap of steaming rice.

Without a word he pushed the food towards me, at the same time looking at me anxiously and suspiciously. This friendliness surprised me and made me feel less angry. At heart I was very annoyed with the dwarfs and, as I thought, with good reason. I ate a little of the dry rice, imitating Puchok. He had soon finished his meal, brought a bamboo from under the shelter and placed it like a trumpet to his lips. From the gulping sound he made I realised that he was drinking water. He then handed me the bamboo. I refused it with a sign, whereupon he again looked at me very curiously.

At all costs I wanted to make friends with Puchok, and intended to leave no means untried. I showed great friendliness and gave him some small presents. For these a European would have expressed cordial gratitude, but my efforts to gain Puchok's friendship met with no success. There is no doubt that much can be done with the Semang by friendliness, but only when they have not already been prejudiced against you, as was the case here.

The Semang is always and without exception suspicious of any stranger ; he prefers to have nothing to do with anybody. If he must, however, he confines his dealings to essentials,

and then disappears again in the dark forest to be alone among his fellow-tribesmen.

Puchok was a diplomat, concealing his thoughts and weighing his words. To my innocent questions in the Malay language he answered bluntly. We had been talking for some time when I asked him about his companions. I thought I had brought him to the point when he would readily tell me the reason for the sudden flight, but he professed ignorance. I was quite sure that he was lying.

When I asked him to accompany me to the Residency, he stood up willingly and followed me. On the road, where the midday sun was blazing mercilessly, we walked side by side. He had his blow-pipe over his shoulder once more, a quiver hanging round his loins and a bush-knife in his girdle. He talked thoughtfully and wisely, for he was old and his hair already flecked with grey.

In the Residency we sat down on the steps of my bungalow. I had a great deal to ask. It is Puchok that I have to thank for my first instruction in Semang geography, which naturally was scrappy. He also gave me my first lesson in the language, though what I learned could hardly serve as a basis for my later studies. The time was so short that not even the phonetic peculiarities of Puchok's language were retained by my ear. Nevertheless, he became sufficiently confidential to put his hand into his rucksack during our conversation and bring out a stone which he had been carrying about for five years. It was a neolithic blade which he called "*Batu Karei*" (Stone of Karei: thunder stone). Puchok was outwardly approachable, but his heart remained untouched. Once more I turned the conversation to his fellow-tribesmen and asked him to take me to them the following morning. He promised to do so, accepted a gift, and went away with his ungainly stride.

Very pleased, I related my success to my host, being full of hope. I had arranged a rendezvous with Puchok on the Perak, whence I was to go with him in company of two Malays



to visit the camp of Gandar. The following morning, however, there was no sign of Puchok. I had to turn back, as the Malays did not know the way. I therefore cut across the rice fields and bush to Puchok's encampment, Hitam, a Malay, following me.

I still had hopes of surprising Puchok in the camp, but this time I was disappointed. The camp was empty, and from the camp fires I knew that no one had been there that night. I sat down on a bamboo couch under a shelter and sketched the site of the encampment and the construction of the huts. The camp contained twelve shelters arranged side by side in an ellipse. The open space between the huts was bare of growth, or rather trodden down. A few clumps of trees remained standing. In front of the camp flowed a clear stream. On my first visit I had noticed a high, narrow, conical hut made of the long leaves of the bertam palm and standing apart from the encampment. I could see that this hut was not used for living in. It was the *Bumbum* or *Pano*, as it is called in the Semang language. At that time I had not understood its purpose, or significance. For some obscure reason this hut was no longer there.

With the help of the Malay I tried to collect all the gear that had been left behind—a few discarded bamboo implements—and with my booty made my way back to the Residency. Once more I must record a failure. High as my hopes had been at the first meeting, I was now equally downcast. I began to fear that the prophecies made in London might be fulfilled. There, during the preparations for my journey, I had been solemnly assured that I should never under any circumstances get into touch with the timid Semang. The failure that so many had already met with seemed likely to be my lot. This haunting fear obsessed me the whole way back.

Once more I conferred with the Resident. He advised me to set out with Malays to visit a more distant camp. All I wanted was at all costs, no matter where, to establish

friendly relations with the natives. The following morning I stood, once more accompanied by Father Cardon and four Malays, on the Perak in Kuala Këndrong. The Resident had kindly placed his boat at my disposal. For two hours we rowed downstream until we reached Kuala Gandar. The boat carried some supplies, as we could not foretell how long we should be on the way. An elderly Malay, who was acquainted with Gandar's camp, left us on the bank and disappeared to look for the Semang in the thick of the forest. He hoped in this way to be able to surprise them and give them no time to make off. It was some time before he came back—having seen nothing. . . .

We rowed some 500 metres further downstream, as from there the camp was easier to reach. Five huts stood in a circle quite close to the slope of the bank. Judging from the litter, the inhabitants could not have been absent more than two days. Apparently they had been alarmed by their fellows from Grik and had gone off with them. About a hundred yards inland stood another camp of six rickety shelters which had long been deserted. The place was overshadowed by many durian fruit trees. I collected what little gear had been left about and had it taken to the boat.

My situation seemed rather hopeless. Which way was I to turn? No one knew where the fugitives were, and what good could it do to follow them? They were afraid of me and there was no practicable means of changing their mood. How had the idea of decapitation come into their heads? Finally my suspicions fell upon my predecessors in Semang investigation who had reached this area. I knew that they had regarded the collection of skulls as the chief objective of their travels. How often might they not have approached these timid people on the subject of skeletons? Was that perhaps the reason why the dwarfs had in the end taken it into their heads that the white man was only out after their heads which must therefore be protected from him?

Ill-humoured and dejected, I sat down on a tree trunk on

the bank. Father Cardon had just added a butterfly to his collection and was looking at me very sympathetically. He sat down by my side and began to take out some lunch, for it would be about midday. But I did not feel at all hungry.

A sharp pain in the neck tore me from my brooding. Involuntarily I felt the spot where the pain was. I felt in my fingers something sickeningly moist and slimy. A leech! Not the common water leech, which is also to be found in these parts, but the land leech, which infests the paths and constitutes the greatest of all pests to the traveller in Malaya.

I could not stand this place any longer. When we were again sitting in the boat, rowing slowly upstream, I had made up my mind to try my luck in another neighbourhood; where, I did not of course know as yet. We had plenty of time to watch the wooded banks. The eye searched the forest but could not penetrate more than a couple of yards. To the right, elephants, perhaps frightened by the approach of the boat, broke through the undergrowth. Footprints on the sand of the bank betrayed where they had been. They must have come down to drink here.

Our boat chiefly followed the right bank. We carefully avoided swift currents and this involved repeatedly crossing the stream. My depression fell away from me the moment I set foot on the bank at Kuala Këndrong. The duty of looking after the men and baggage I left entirely to my companion, who followed about a hundred yards behind me, hunting butterflies. I felt a sudden confidence that on the way to Grik the disappointing situation would change for the better. What I was hoping was that I should run across Puchok. Not a quarter an hour later, at a bend in the path, two chocolate-coloured dwarfs stood before me, as though they had risen out of the earth. They gazed at me like trapped animals, for it was impossible for them to avoid me. Their hearts beat so violently that I could see them thudding against their naked chests. Each had a strip of cloth round his loins, but neither was carrying a blow-pipe or bush-knife. Long,

tangled, frizzy hair, such as I had seen among the natives of Zambesi in Africa when mourning their dead, covered their heads. The younger, a boy of about eighteen, looked at me anxiously with his big eyes. His nose was broad, his lips thick ; but the large, laughing eyes gave the fresh, boyish face a pleasant look. He was called Sēmambu. His companion, Těko, might have been thirty. He had no claim to beauty. The root of the nose was deeply indented, and his black eyes were surmounted by bushy brows. This produced a sullen, but by no means repulsive, impression. Indeed, I never met with any ugly dwarfs, even afterwards.

I had soon recovered from my delighted surprise. Not at any price would I allow the men to get away without having made a fresh attempt to approach them. I thought they belonged to Puchok's group, and asked them where he was to be found. They did not, however, know Puchok, nor did they belong to his group.

Meanwhile Father Cardon and the bearers had come up with us. Cardon laughed cheerfully at the lucky meeting. Small gifts were speedily produced and the pair were made happy with tobacco, beads, and pocket-knives. Father Cardon hung round Těko's neck a bead necklace, which was acknowledged with a grin. One of our party, who knew both the men, exchanged a few words with them. I learned that they were not Jěram, but Jahai, and came from Bersiak, a district about thirty kilometres upstream. I had, of course, no idea that I was working on the boundary-line of two tribes with distinct languages. Not until some weeks later did this difference strike me.

After we had obtained the information we required concerning their encampment, and received their promise that they would not run away as Puchok and his companions had done, I gave the dwarfs further presents. "Puchok and his fellows were fools," Těko said complacently. My wits sharpened by experience, however, I did not yet trust the pair completely. Then Hitam, our bearer, came forward

and went bail that we should find the Bersiak encampment. He knew the men well, they lived not far from him. He also told them that he would come with me the following day and they need have no fear. In this way we took leave of them and I hoped to see them again soon.

Like other things, dealing with the Orang-Utan must be learned. As I had no one to teach me, I gradually acquired by months of experience a technique which later served me very well. Progress was however slow and bitter.

In Grik I took leave of my host and friend, Father Cardon, and the following morning pushed off alone into the interior. As bearers and companions I had hired Malays, including two of dubious reputation, who were opium smokers. This threw all the greater responsibility upon Hitam.

Bersiak is one of the most advanced Malay outposts in the interior. There is a path leading to Bersiak, first through open country and then disappearing in the obscurity of the forest. A pleasant coolness envelops the traveller when he passes out of the tropical sunshine. The way was dry so that we made good headway. Although this was my first journey through the forest and the path one of the best I ever met with in those parts, I was prevented from enjoying it fully by having to guard against a false step, running into the trees or losing myself in the undergrowth. There was therefore no opportunity for observing my surroundings. We crossed the boggy river Rui by a narrow hanging bridge which swayed ominously under our feet. Beneath us the dirty stream splashed, for the clear water was polluted by the great tin mines of Klian Intan, upstream.

At noon we reached Bersiak. Banana trees and rice fields proclaimed the Malay settlement. Tired with the march, we descended the bank of the Bersiak river, waded the stream, and stalked into a field of ripe rice. The midday sun blazed down with tropical intensity upon the women labourers who were busy cutting the golden ears. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I noticed among them some black, dwarfish

women, who, at the unexpected sight of myself, paused in their work and gazed timidly towards me. As I was determined to exercise the greatest caution and reserve so as not to frighten anyone, I marched straight through the rice fields towards the rest bungalow, which stood beyond the fields.

It was a promising sign that the women did not desert their work and run away when I appeared. Under a shelter in the field I saw others, who, together with Malays, were standing in great straw baskets, threshing the rice with their feet.

While my bearers cooked the meal and then lay down for a long rest, sucking at their opium pipes, Hitam went off to look for the dwarfs who were in camp not far from my quarters. He met with good success. Soon a long procession of men and boys came up, led by Hitam and a Malay with a bushy moustache. All over the peninsula the Semang, it must be explained, live in a state of more or less dependence upon the Malays. Wherever I encountered a group, I discovered that they had made some sort of pact with a Malay. To him they brought from time to time the products of the forest, which they exchanged for rice, iron knives, or cloth. The Malay in this way exercises a certain degree of protectorship in regard to the forest dwarfs, whom, it goes without saying, he does not always treat honourably, and so often reaps great personal profit from this arrangement. If he requires them to work for him, he fetches them out of the forest and often rewards them most inadequately for their hard labour. More than once they came to me in trouble and showed me the handful of rice with which the Malay had paid them for a day's work. The men and women complained bitterly of the extortionate methods of their masters. Of course the Semang to-day are not compelled to leave the forest in order to work for the Malays, but hunger and the craving to eat rice at least once a month drives them out. Others again have committed themselves to an agreement with the crafty Malay. He may have talked them into taking some piece of



A GROUP OF JAKUDN (*p. 13*)



VISITORS (*p. 33*)



COOKING WITH BAMBOO REEDS (p. 25)



TWO BOYS FROM THE BERSIAK ENCAMPMENT (p. 33)



cloth valued according to his own estimate. The Malay does not demand immediate payment ; that would not suit his purpose. He wants to get the poor forest dwellers into his power. This, of course, involves complications. The Semang is often not in a position to pay and therefore avoids his creditor as long as he can. It may even happen that whole groups, in order to evade their obligations, completely disappear from a district. But, since without the Malays they are unable, or scarcely able, to live, they reappear in some entirely different spot whither their creditor cannot follow them, and there conclude another dubious bargain with other Malays. For the most part the Malay demands forest products from his debtors : rattan or hapoi, mats woven from rattan, leaves for roofing huts, resin, and so on. From time to time the whole Semang camp will set out to obtain these things wherewith to satisfy their creditor. Lisa, who was now leading in the dwarfs, was such a creditor. I did not realise this relationship, and took him for the village chief, which however he was not. Nevertheless, I addressed him as *penghulu*. If one wishes to get into touch with any group of Semang, it is necessary to establish good relations with their Malay protector. Success finally rests with him. He can scare them with a word, or can persuade them to remain. He it is they trust.

It was therefore a good move of Hitam's when he hinted to me that in distributing presents to the new arrivals I should think first of Lisa. As at that time I did not understand his position I did this reluctantly.

Apart from a few boys, the new-comers were all elderly men, dark brown in colour, with curly hair and large, flashing eyes. They looked wide-eyed at me and the things I unpacked to give them. They were soon squatting around me, talking together in their language. They called themselves Jahai.

After our meal, I started the caravan off again. At the edge of the rice field we passed through a bamboo fence into Lisa's kampong and then turned aside into the forest. A

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savage barking of dogs, accompanied by the shrieking of many women's voices, met us from the undergrowth. The shrieking was not on my account, but to silence the dogs. As shouting alone did not serve, bamboos were brought vigorously into action and the dogs slunk howling under the bamboo shelters, where they continued to growl.

The camp was built upon a slope. My companions all crept into their huts, gave their presents to the women, and watched me with interest from the distance.

I had kept back various little presents and some tobacco to give to those who had remained in the camp. Passing from hut to hut, I distributed beads among the women and children and knives among the men. I produced some tobacco from my pocket and gave it to a youngish man whom the Malay had pointed out to me as the chief of the encampment, asking him to distribute it among the inhabitants. When I had done so a young but stout Malay, who had joined the procession from the village, took from Jelei—as the chief was called—the tobacco I had given him and himself distributed it as he thought fit. The coolness of the Malay annoyed me. I controlled myself, however, and said nothing, as a too hasty remark would only have done harm.

This fat Malay, who was of most phlegmatic demeanour and scarcely moved a muscle of his face—unless it were to shift his quid of tobacco from one corner of his mouth to the other with his tongue—later became my loyal companion in the wildest part of the interior; I came to trust him absolutely and owe him much.

The encampment was in festive mood. Women and children decked themselves with the beads I had given them. With a smile I watched how Jelei placed the bead necklace round the neck of his young wife who was sitting beside him on the bamboo couch, and teased her. Others stuck bamboo combs into the clump of hair standing up at the back of their heads, and decked themselves with foliage, which they fastened in the combs or in their girdles.

Under each shelter flickered a small fire round which the little men and women sat and watched the cooking. Large bamboo reeds lay across each hearth and were looked after by women and girls. That evening there was rice, which had been earned from the Malays. Meanwhile I examined the individual parts of the encampment once more, appraised this or that thing, made offers, counted, and so on. In this way I had soon assembled a whole collection of articles. Some I paid for with money, but most with beads and cloth. The lion's share of the beads was acquired by Jelei for his wife. But they had to be brightly coloured. More and more bead necklaces encircled her neck while she looked coquettishly about her. I felt sorry for the woman at her side ; a strapping, strong, fully grown girl whom Jelei addressed as sister. Curiously enough he gave her nothing, so that I felt obliged to pour a handful of beads into her hand.

Sitting alone under a shelter, I saw a grey-haired, half-blind old man, old Bersiak. As a widower he lived alone and was looked after by his unmarried daughter, who had a hut next to his. For the most part he looked after himself. I gave the old man a few special presents.

Two men brought before me a boy of about six, the son of a widow. They showed me his broken arm and asked me to heal it. I felt embarrassed, as I had never dealt with a fractured limb. I therefore tried to get out of the difficulty with the excuse that I had brought no medical gear with me, but told them how they could heal the arm themselves. As a solace, the boy received a present. About a month later I saw him again with his arm completely healed.

The shades of evening were lengthening, and soon we were in complete darkness. The air was pleasantly warm. We talked comfortably by the bright fire. I had taken a seat on Jelei's couch. My request for a dance was immediately complied with, especially as Lisa wanted one too. Bamboo reeds serving as water-containers were brought out from under the shelters. Women and girls squatted in a row,

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while five younger women who had decorated themselves strangely with greenery and cloths stepped into the foreground. Shy and giggling, they executed some timid dance-steps to the hollow accompaniment of the bamboo reeds, which the musicians varied by stamping on the ground until the forest re-echoed with the beat. The dance did not get properly under way until the men and boys finally struck up a song. Three of the dancers at once fell out while two young women displayed their graceful dance movements. How coquettishly they looked in my direction! The dancer does not move from the one spot and, turning for the most part only the upper part of her body, first to right then to left, slowly and solemnly sways her arms on high and tries to put the greatest possible grace into the movement of her hands.

The male choir sounded to me extremely strange. Jelei began and the others joined in a few beats later, repeating each verse. It was like the murmur of a stream, the roaring of a river, the sighing of the wind in the crests of trees. A clear boy's voice rose pleasantly above the chorus. The magic of it gripped us all. I myself sprang to my feet, seized the bamboo from a squatting girl, and stamped and laughed with the others. Negrito music, negrito song, negrito dance—I experienced them here for the first time; how often I have heard and seen them since, and yet I have never been able to make them my own. They have always eluded me.

The entertainment was interrupted by a loud barking of dogs. At once the dancing broke off and everybody stared towards the entrance. Two figures, gliding through the darkness of the night-covered forest, passed quickly before the fires and entered two separate shelters. No word of greeting from either side! In silence they stared towards me. I recognised my two acquaintances of the day before, Těko and Sēmambu. Těko had three children who busied themselves with the package their father had thrown down. The mother with difficulty satisfied her offspring with bananas which she drew

from the packet. I had not given another thought to either of the two. I was surprised at their late arrival, but did not learn the reason for the delay.

We broke up after Jelei had offered me some cooked rice, which I tasted. Torches were prepared from dried bamboos split into thin shreds at the end, and by their bright light we followed the zigzag path to my camp. I left the articles I had bought in the Malay's hut, arranged with him and some Semang men for two companions for the following morning, took from Hitam the meal he had cooked for me, and wrapped myself in my blanket. The first night on the edge of the forest after a successful day ! Until deep into the night the pungo bird reiterated its eternal "Klapp klapp klapp," the weirdest of all the night noises of the Malay jungle.

About thirty yards from the rest bungalow, in which I spent the first night, ran a canal which Lisa had dug from the Bersiak river to his rice field to keep it constantly under water. Thither I directed my first steps for a refreshing bath.

Black figures were just emerging from the forest and making their way towards the store hut in the rice field. This pleased me greatly ; the people had not gone away, my presence did not appear to disturb them. After breakfast I hurried over to them while my bearers were preparing the loads. With glad relief I greeted two men who wanted to come with me. They were having a meal which they had just cooked. They were Ramogn and Jelei, father and son. The latter had his blow-pipe over his shoulder and his quiver tied round him, while the father carried the *parang* (bush-knife).

The objective of our expedition was Kuala Temėngor, about twenty kilometres away. While my bearers chose the shorter route over the mountain, the two Semang led me along the Perak river. We marched alone through the complete silence of the forest, broken only from time to time by the rushing of the Perak rapids. The path was trodden deep by

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elephants, and so ploughed up that sometimes it was difficult to get past the puddles. This is the track of countless elephant trains heavily loaded with tin from a mine about half-way up the Temėngor. The path wound and zigzagged along the rapid Perak, following the course of the river, through lofty trees, bamboo thickets, and thorny undergrowth, and over smooth rock. Every now and again we heard the screech of the *burong lang*, a fish-hawk, as it shot over the water, or the full, trilling melody of the barau bird, the Malay nightingale, on the river brink. We waded through the clear water of the mountain streams plashing merrily down the slope, and through deep standing water where these joined the river. Often, like the fool I was, I stooped to slake my burning thirst. It produced weariness and upset the stomach, and I had to pay for it later.

My two "savage" companions were wiser. Only once did I see them halt in clear water. Ramogn folded a large leaf to form a cup, filled it with the cool liquid, and drank a few gulps. Jelei did the same. We went on our way chatting together. I did my best to ask questions and acquire fresh information, but I had little success. The cry of a bird high above our heads pulled us up. In the crest of a great tree it sat so hidden that I could not distinguish it from the foliage. Jelei set his blow-pipe to his lips. . . .

*Puff . . . sssst . . .* a whirl through the air. I saw the bird fly off with flapping wings, but a tail-feather, in the quill of which was sticking the broken-off point of the dart, fluttered down. I pocketed both the feather and the dart. It was a masterly shot.

Ramogn kept a look out to right and left. Now he would see a tuberous plant, now an edible leaf. Had he been able to write he would certainly have entered their position in his note-book, but as it was he made a mental note of it in the Orang-Utan fashion with the idea of fetching it some other time for his larder. The hollow tinkle of elephant bells at once brought my companions to a standstill. Swiftly they

clambered up the slope, before the huge beasts came into view. Four heavily laden animals strode heavily past us, groping to right and left with their trunks for fresh bamboo sprouts.

Jelei pointed to a hill on the left and said: "If you come this way later we shall be living here and shall be able to let you have tubers, *hubi*." I did not understand him, though later his meaning was made clear, and indeed under rather unpleasant circumstances.

We reached Kuala Temėngor in the heat of the midday sun. It burned terribly as soon as we emerged from the forest. On the far side of the river a Malay kampong with a rest bungalow stood on the top of a high slope.

A Malay, the lord and protector of the place, rowed over on a bamboo raft to carry us across. We were at our destination. My bearers were already lying in the shade of the hut sucking their opium pipes. Their glazed eyes betrayed the effect of the poison.

After taking a meal—it was now late afternoon—the two men were anxious to start back. I detained them. I wanted to keep them with me overnight to talk with them. Also I was anxious about them. The idea of a night journey through this terrifying forest made me shudder. I did not yet know the habits of the Orang-Utan, to whom it is a small thing to spend a night in the forest. Its darkness gives them confidence, whereas the treeless plain makes them uneasy. "We must have trees round us, then all is well," a Semang explained to me later, slapping a tree trunk. Certainly Ramogn and Jelei were setting their minds on getting away from this open place and spending the night somewhere in the forest darkness under a leafy shelter by a blazing fire. I did not, however, give way, and as under no circumstances would they sleep in the hut with the bearers, they stretched their tired limbs in front of it by the fire that had been lit for the night.

This gave me an opportunity of being longer in their company and listening to their talk. I had thousands of questions to ask them. They described to me the boundaries

of the Jahai, and Jeram-Semang territory. They told me of the Orang-Bukit deep in the interior towards the south, those strange people of whom the Semang speak with a certain awe and yet at the same time with disapproval, for, as Ramogn told me, they do not bury their dead. The Orang-Bukit are the Ple-Sakai that I visited ten months later.

About their own views, however, the pair revealed nothing. They pretended not to know how their dead were buried, or who Karei was, whose name I had repeatedly heard. But with the language I was more successful. I felt satisfied with what I had achieved. Before going to sleep, and early in the morning before we moved off, I made them promise solemnly to wait for me if I came past their camp a few days later. What the whole population of the camp had already promised the two men confirmed. Thus we parted on the best of terms ; I with the cheering thought that I should soon take up my quarters among these excellent Bersiak Semang—as I had understood they were called.

In the early morning I was in a hurry to move to Temėngor, which was about 10 miles away. Hitam, however, held me back, explaining how dangerous this route was on account of the wild elephants. He said it had more than once happened that travellers in the early morning had been attacked by these forest monsters. I allowed myself to be persuaded and waited an hour.

Like all the Semang territory, this stretch between Kuala Temėngor and Temėngor is forest-covered mountain country.

It must have been eight o'clock, but nothing was yet to be seen of the sun, which was struggling with the thick clouds of mist enveloping the landscape like a veil. They trailed along the mountains like tattered smoke clouds. The sun kept up the battle and finally won, but only late in the day, when we had already been tramping for some time along the heavy, elephant-trampled path. To our right roared the Temėngor, a considerable tributary of the Perak. Its waters were as tawny as those of the Rui and showed evidence of

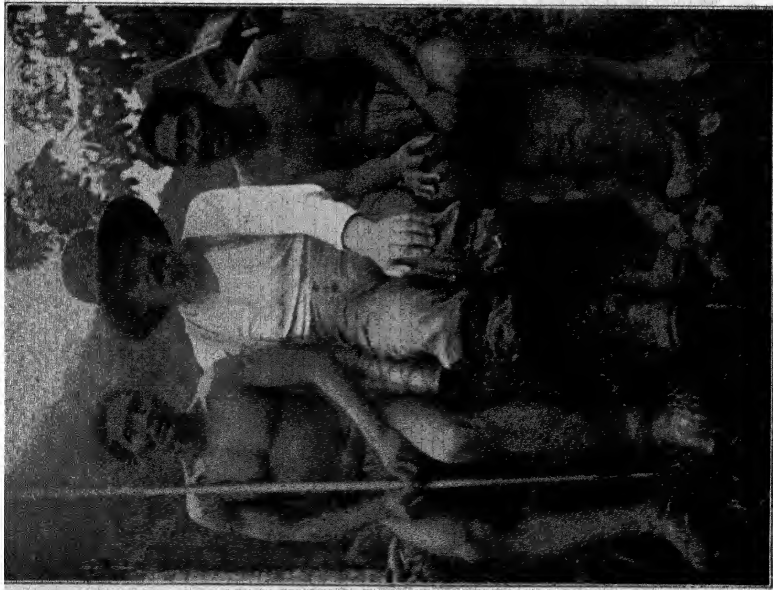




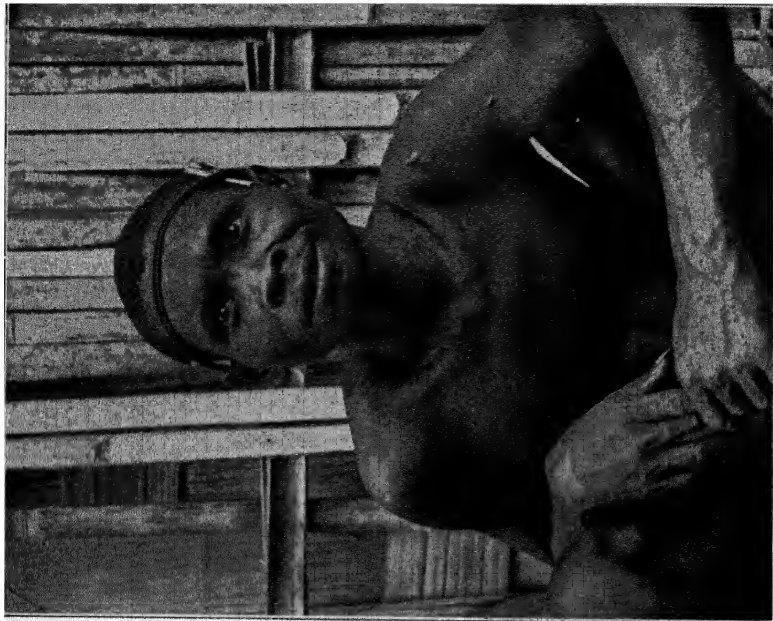
COQUETTISH GLANCES (p. 36)



THE ENCAMPMENT AT KUALA TARO (p. 43)



MY TWO GUIDES ON THE PERAK (p. 37)



PLAITED HEAD-BAND (pp. 43, 107)

the digging of hundreds of Chinese coolies at the tin mines a few miles upstream.

Teměngor is a large Malay kampong with a *datoh* at its head. According to the Semang, the Malays of Teměngor claim to have penetrated into the interior from the east coast. Their leader, Teměngor, was only able to make headway with the Orang-Utan by taking a wife from among them. In this way he was tolerated, and later acquired leadership by cunning and force. The Malays, of course, will have nothing to do with this story. What Malay in these days would take a Semang wife! In their view such a thing is obscene, for they do not regard the Orang-Utan as human. Formerly, however, this was not the case. I saw many Malays whose negrito origin was written on their faces, and on enquiry I have found that their mothers were Semang. But it would have been an insult to remind them of their origin. True, a few Malays related freely how their forefathers, when, scarcely sixty or eighty years before, they first pushed their way into the interior, took wives from among the dwarfs.

They entered the country in search of booty and wealth. In the forest they were more helpless than children. They therefore attached themselves to the Semang, lived in their encampments, cleared the forest with their help to sow crops, and married their daughters. Then better days came; the labour of the Semang bore fruit and the Malays grew rich. They rowed downstream on rafts heavily laden with the produce of the forest and then brought women of their own race back with them as wives. Thus it went on for decades until their own progeny were sufficiently numerous for the children to intermarry. Now that the poor forest dwarfs are no longer needed, marriage with them is regarded as the most bestial of crimes.

The kampong of Teměngor forms a green oasis, with many cocoanut palms and banana trees, in the middle of the virgin forest. Here again I came upon a rest bungalow on the bank of the river, which tempted me to take a refreshing bath.

## 42 AMONG THE FOREST DWARFS OF MALAYA

I summoned the *datoh*, but in ignorance of the position of this important gentleman, who by the way was an opium-smoker, I committed several solecisms in my advances, for I took him to be a man of humble origin and rewarded him accordingly.

In Teměngor I had the unusual opportunity of getting to know the Orang-Utan who had hurried out of the mountains, summoned by the Malays to help with the rice harvest. I will discuss the Ple separately later.

On the evening of my arrival at Teměngor I discovered a Semang family under a Malay hut. The Malay huts are built on piles, so that there is under the floor a space about a metre and a half high that can be used as a shelter, provided it is reasonably clean.

When the forest people appear in the kampong, either in answer to a call or on business of their own, they are not on any account allowed to enter a Malay hut. They remain squatting at the door or take shelter in the space beneath the floor, especially when they are obliged to stay the night. This was where I found the Jahai family. The father of the young wife, a scrubby old man with tousled curly hair, had only a slender growth of beard. Soon an individual of about the same age and equally unkempt stood beside him. The younger generation had tolerably pleasant features. Judging from her hair, the woman had no purely negrito blood. In Teměngor I repeatedly observed foreign influence in many Semang men and women. This phenomenon is not surprising, as Teměngor lies on the boundary between Semang and Sakai, between whom there are no barriers to relationship.

From these people I learned that a Jahai encampment was situated not far from the kampong. I persuaded the young man to guide me there the following morning.

Although on the following morning I was feeling far from well, I set out nevertheless. A few Malays had also joined us. It was still early in the day, and a damp misty chill hung over the Teměngor valley. The grass was so wet with dew

that in a few minutes we were wet up to the chest. My arms were swollen and I had to carry them in slings. A slight fever had taken hold of me. But the rough path which claimed one's whole attention allowed me from time to time to forget my sufferings.

A group of men was approaching us, talking and shouting loudly. They were Jahai from the camp we were intending to visit. We had no difficulty in persuading them to turn back. From our experience of the day before I guessed the camp was not far away, and was therefore surprised when we had to wade a stream. Thinking there was only one, I had myself carried over to save taking off my boots. Soon we found ourselves, for the second, third, sixth time, faced by an arm of the river. Was it always the same one or were they different? From this day began the many long, and often difficult, wanderings in the water of streams and rivers, over boulders and through morass. Forest paths are always full of surprises.

When we had climbed a hill we stood in the camp on the Kuala Taro. I counted ten families, who had arranged their shelters in a circle. Shortly after my arrival women came out of the forest with their rucksacks packed full of forest tubers. A band of little girls accompanied them. Shyly they withdrew to one side on seeing me. Altogether there were seventeen children in the open space.

These Jahai had their faces heavily painted with black and white colouring, which is also sometimes used as a remedy for headache. They seem to have acquired this method of painting, as also the keeping of hens, from the Ple, their Sakai neighbours. It was the same with the nose ornament I saw here; the membrane separating the nostrils was pierced and a porcupine quill inserted as an ornament. This custom also comes from the Ple and has spread greatly but not universally among the Jahai.

There was not much of particular interest in the camp. Contrasts ruled here; I noticed males wearing Malay

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cloth and others with the girdle of twisted bark : some were of the finest negrito type, while others showed a mingling with the Ple. I even observed the tendency towards the Mongol eye-slits which I later saw in individual cases among the Ple. After I had bought a few specimens and taken some photographs, I left. The stereotyped speech test showed the people to belong unmistakably to the Jahai.

That was the most south-easterly Semang encampment in Perak. It did not come within my sphere of investigation, as I was interested in pure types, of which there were few here. It was also useless to go further as I had reached the Ple boundary. I therefore turned back. I had already negotiated the previous day with a Malay to take me back by raft to Bersiak and Grik. He had built a strong raft of bamboos, about 12 metres long and with a rudder at each end, which easily carried my men and baggage.

It was my first trip by raft in these waters, the first of a long series. I listened to the song of the barau bird as the raft glided silently over the water. I fell into a solemn mood. The sun lit up the great trees entwined with creepers, the shafts of light quivered deep in the undergrowth. The Malays amused themselves with fishing, when they were not occupied with steering the raft. A snake, with swift coiling of its body and head held high above the surface, followed in our wake, until a heavy blow with a bamboo pole caused it to vanish in the stream.

The day before I had been told that not far from Temėngor Malays had captured an elephant. The Patani Malays are skilful elephant hunters, whereas the Semang have as little as possible to do with elephants. The report that they hunt elephants with the bow and eat their flesh is therefore improbable, and I did not find it confirmed anywhere. They always avoid the elephant, and Jahai despise elephant meat. Close to the bank an elephant stood penned. We lay to. I jumped on to the bank with my camera to take this unusual picture. The animal was of medium size, with half-grown tusks.

When I stood before it, it trumpeted loudly and lashed furiously with its trunk. But there was no cause for fear as the animal was so tightly shut in a bamboo frame that it could hardly move. A large number of Malays were lying under a shelter watching the torments of their prey.

The Patani also know how to tame and train elephants. Thick long creepers with loops are laid in the places where elephants frequently pass. As the hunters remain at hand, they soon know when an animal has been captured. They drag it to the ground, fasten its legs, and then place it in a narrow stall. To prevent the animal having to stand in the mud they beat the ground with clubs. Stakes are driven between the animal's legs so that it can neither lie down nor move. From a bamboo pipe fixed over its back, water drips continuously on to the elephant. A shelter is built over it to protect it from the sun. According to the Malay's account, the elephant remains standing in this structure for about three weeks, provided it can stand the torture. It is then tame and accustomed to its master, who from time to time climbs on to its back and massages it by tramping about. Many elephants, however, succumb to the torment; I heard later that this one did, involving its owner in a loss of about £100.

At midday we reached Kuala Temengor, after a pleasant, peaceful trip. I should have liked to push on to Bersiak to spend the night with my friends there, but when I heard that we should not reach the place before evening, I was satisfied, and was richly compensated by making the acquaintance of yet another Jahai group. Soon after our arrival, word went round that Sakai were at hand. The child of the Malay living in the place brought the news. The forest folk refused to come with the child, who had been sent out to fetch them. It said "*Dia takut*" (They're afraid). A fresh message met with the same result, but finally they came in response to a third. First there appeared a smart young man whose appearance was not as clumsy and awkward as that of the average Semang. He was followed by a row of

women and children, all dirty and covered with mud. The women and girls wore their hair in a knot waving at the back of their heads, in which a lot of flowers and leaves showed brightly. The women also wore in their girdles clumps of grass, the purpose and meaning of which I did not discover. I distributed among all of them the remains of the tobacco and salt, and each received in addition a small coin. To the boy—it was Keladi—I gave my own pocket-knife. The group belonged to two different camps, most of them being from the Teladn river.

A young woman and two girls went away, to return soon with an armful of tubers, which they presented to me.

It had begun to rain when our visitors went off home. The rain splashed down throughout the night until early morning. Hardly had it ceased when we boarded our raft and ventured on to the rapids of the foaming Perak. I was not aware of any danger attached to a trip by raft on these rivers, but when we approached the cliffs one of the crew threw some tobacco among the rocks as a sacrificial offering. That was to placate the water spirits. They proved unusually favourable, for the state of the water allowed us to negotiate the most dangerous cliffs successfully.

With a loud “Hallo!” we drew alongside the bank at Bersiak to attract the attention of Jahai in the encampment. Our shouts re-echoed from the forest and soon one black figure after another emerged from the undergrowth. They squatted down before me in the shade of a tree, a group of eight men.

I had no further doubt about having won the people over. I distributed a few more presents, stowed away the specimens I had bought, and went on my way downstream, towards Kuala Kěndrong and Grik. From the distance we were greeted by the twin mountains Kěndrong and Kerunai.

When, in the evening, I landed at Captain Berkeley’s, I had an opportunity of relating to him my experiences and successes, to which he listened very sympathetically.



In the late evening I made the acquaintance of two more Semang, who had come to the Resident with a petition. They were splendid, clean young men ; one, who called himself a *penglima*, was called Bejuan, the other Chenbis. I met both of them frequently some months later. I was very favourably impressed by Bejuan ; he seemed very alert and intelligent. And yet I was completely deceived ; his treachery will come to light in the course of the narrative. He was the first to give me information concerning Karei, the thunder god the Semang believe in. Karei lives above and has the status of a *penghulu* (chief) or *raja* (king). He is greater than the *hantu* (spirits) of the Malays. He is the source of everything. He demands human blood, which they must sacrifice to him.

I mention this definite, if scanty information because it was the first at all positive evidence I had of the Semang belief in a higher being. But it was many months before I had penetrated the depths of their religious beliefs to any appreciable extent.

The following morning I went to Lenggong by car. There were various problems I hoped to investigate here. In the mountain chain bordering the Lenggong to the northward there are huge chalk-caves. A rumour still persisted among anthropologists that the Malay dwarfs lived in underground dwellings. I was therefore naturally anxious to examine these caves at close quarters. I found them inhabited solely by bats ; not a human being to be found. From the ashes, however, and from various paintings in white, red and black colouring, it was to be assumed that human beings had lived there. But who ? I tried digging, but without success. The Malays with me were in this, as in all things, unreliable sources of information. One afternoon I met a group of Semang camping under an overhanging cliff. But the hollow formed by the rock only afforded them temporary shelter while their shelters were being built. Moreover, they denied emphatically that they would ever live for days together in caves. Such

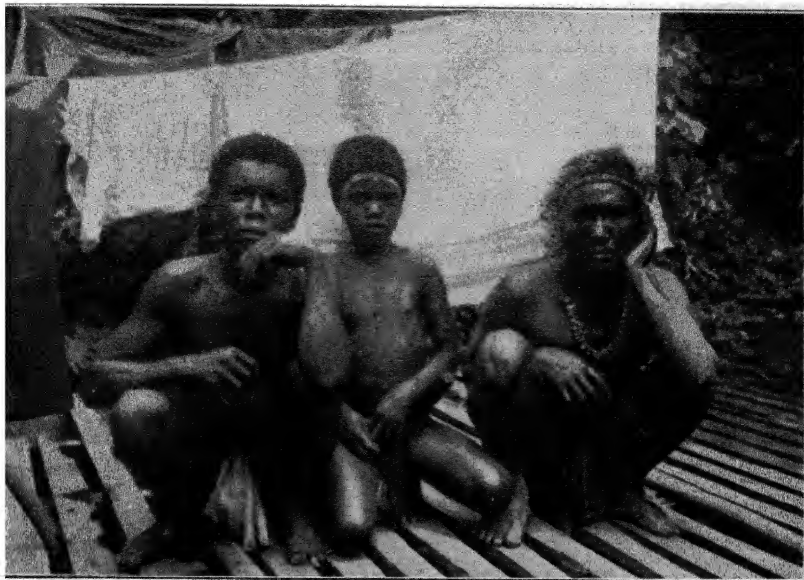
a life under a heavy roof is contrary to their tastes and nature.

If they refuse to sleep under a Malay roof, how much less likely are they to do so under overhanging rock? I asked a boy to make some charcoal drawings for me, which he did at once and satisfied me that most of the pictures in the cave were Semang work.

I set the cave problem aside, particularly as I had not the necessary time at my disposal, and turned my attention to the Semang living in the neighbourhood. A group had been reported at Sumpitan. Accompanied by a Malay, I hastened thither in the car, but was unfortunately too late, for the forest gipsies had already moved to Ijok.

Another group was living on the further bank of the Perak, by the side of the Chepor river. I made for this place with a small party. We crossed the river in small flat-bottomed boats and marched another few miles through Malay kampongs. Malay men and women passed in holiday dress, their gay clothing, red, green, violet, and white, showing up brilliantly through the green bushes. A marriage was being celebrated in the village. Limp from the march in the burning sun, I sat down on a tree trunk, asked for a cocoanut, and drank the milk with relish.

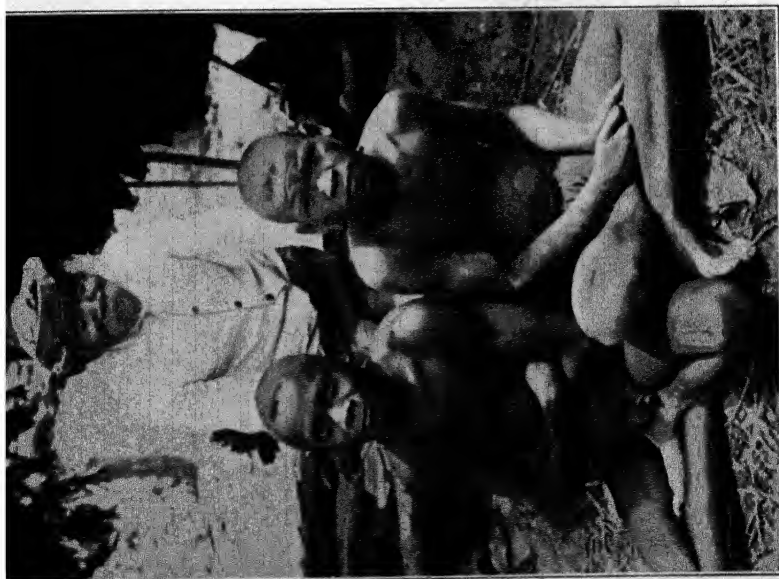
At the end of the village, a Malay of whom we inquired the whereabouts of the Sakai (as the forest dwarfs are here called), told us that they had gone to the marriage feast to see what they could beg. I sent after them. Three woolly-haired figures appeared, including an old gentleman with a martial moustache and in Malay dress. He too claimed to be a Semang. His two companions were almost naked and had their skins covered with scabs. The broad, triangular noses were deeply indented at the root. Their eyes were large and gazed searchingly into the distance. While the two younger men were obvious negrito types, I suspected a mixture of Malay blood in the case of the old man. I at once took possession of the thrée, offered them the small articles I had



SEMANG AND HALF-BREED FROM TEMENGOR (p. 44)



"DIA TAKUT!" (THEY ARE FRIGHTENED!) (p. 45)



TWO SAKAI WITH MALAY HALF-BREED (p. 48)



THEY WANTED TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED (p. 53)

brought with me, and went off with them to the encampment. This lay on the slope of a considerable hill, which was completely stripped of timber.

The encampment consisted of three living huts and a store hut, the latter built in the Malay fashion on piles, whereas the others were shelters. That of the old man consisted of two shelters built facing one another and so forming a tunnel-shaped hut. As bamboos were rare here, the people had to use gourds as water containers. They cultivate not only this fruit, but also mandioka and even rice. There were also hens about, one of which was caught in a noose, to show me how this works. I found their weapons to be blow-pipes, which, however, they do not know how to make themselves. The old man mentioned that in his younger days he had used the bow and arrow, which to-day are completely obsolete. I could not gather any information of value concerning their customs and habits. Here was further confirmation of the fact that it is scarcely possible, during a short visit, to learn anything of value about the spiritual life of savages, however many questions one may ask. Nothing but prolonged sojourn among them will unlock their hearts and minds and eventually loose their tongues.

The interesting thing about the meeting I have just described is the fact that the old man should claim to be a Semang. "In the old days we too were Sakai, when we hunted monkeys in the forest and looked for roots ; but to-day, when we have our own crops and own hens and everything the same as the Malays, to-day we are Semang," the old man maintained.

There was very little left that was typically Semang about the camp, with the exception of a few individuals, like the old man's two sons-in-law who had come with me. There was little to be hoped for that would be of value for my mission ; and in any case it was too small, for apart from the old man with the moustache there was no one in the camp but his two newly arrived sons-in-law, and his family.

I should have preferred to see the other group that was wandering in the neighbourhood of Lenggong-Sumpitan, for this the Malays reported to be very large. These, however, had crossed the mountains to Ijok, more than 20 miles away. The suggestion that we should follow them along the path over the mountains was vetoed by the Malays, who were afraid to risk the path in a small party from fear of tigers. I therefore decided upon the circuitous route via Taiping.

The car was able to reach within a few kilometres of Ijok. I at once sought out a Malay to go with me, and was fortunate in finding an old man, who, like many of his companions, had come over from Ulu Ijok to pay his taxes. These tax-payers were squatting in long rows before the bungalow in which the officials were sitting preparing their registers. I left my belongings behind in the town hall, loaded my guide and myself with presents for the Semang, and staggered off in his wake. The path led through the Ijok valley, which is full of Malay kampongs. These nestled peacefully in the shade of the cocoanut palms, surrounded by durian, bread-fruit, mangost, and mango trees whose dark green gave a heavy look to the landscape. Canals, leading the water of the river to the lower-lying rice fields, repeatedly crossed the path. These were small but quite awkward obstacles, but still more troublesome were the many bamboo fences a metre high which barred the path. These the traveller is forced to climb; he can do so, but the water buffaloes cannot, and it is to prevent these animals breaking into ground where they are not allowed that these obstacles are erected. We met with few human beings, as it was already too hot. The rice harvest here was over, so that there was no need for anyone to go out in the heat.

We halted at my guide's bungalow. While I refreshed myself with a cocoanut, he gave some instructions to the inhabitants of the house. This bungalow was the last in Ulu Ijok. Less than twenty minutes later we had reached the forest. Through thickets of bamboo and rattan we followed

the windings of the river. Two Semang women with loads on their backs waded in panic to the further bank as soon as they caught sight of us. After some searching, the guide found the path to the encampment. Scarcely had we reached the other bank than we found ourselves standing in the middle of the camp itself, which was situated on a peninsula formed by the Ijok river. Here, as at Chepor, the huts were completely exposed to the rays of the sun. There was scarcely a tree thick enough for shade. The camp must have been pitched in this spot because the windings of the river afforded some protection against wild animals.

The encampment was very large for the Orang-Utan ; I had never before seen such a large number of huts together. I counted eighteen of them, disposed in an irregular ellipse. The simple weather-shelter was again the rule, though I saw several tunnel-shaped dwellings formed by two shelters facing one another.

The greater part of the inhabitants, and almost all the women and children, were absent. They were in the Malay village earning rice by labour, while the men were searching the forest for rattan. The group had been wandering about in the neighbourhood of Lenggong for many weeks and had fallen out with the local Malays. Now they had reappeared on the far side of the mountain in Ijok to try their luck there. The Semang of this district is losing more and more his racial characteristics. Surrounded and exploited everywhere by the Malays, but at the same time living in dependance on them, he is forfeiting his native force and original mode of life. He is no longer as guileless as his fathers.

Soon a number of young men and youths were collected around me. The men were terribly disfigured by *kurap*. This skin disease was so widespread that most of them looked like tattooed Samoans. Their hands were never still, for *kurap* is not only a disfigurement but also produces violent twitching. I never saw so many victims of the disease as in this camp. They called themselves by the same name as the

people near Grik and, from the list of words I was able to make, their relationship with the latter was obvious.

The Semang appeared to me very small and stocky. Later, too, I was struck with the shortness of their stature. Their hair was close cropped and woolly. They refused some small combs which I had brought as presents because they had no use for them. Beads were greatly prized as ornaments. In isolated cases the piercing of the nose to admit an ornament is practised. Their weapon is the blow-pipe ; here, too, the bow has fallen into disuse.

As in all the other camps, I wanted to take a few photographs, but was prevented from doing so by the intervention of the vice-*kepala* (*kepala* : head). He made me quite a speech, which so annoyed me that I had difficulty in containing myself. "I know what you want to do," he started off in a loud voice, "you want to shut up our *sarupa* (bodies) in that box (he meant my camera). Some one did that some time ago and in consequence many fell sick and died. You must not do it. And if you do you must pay ten *renggit* (a pound). That is what the others did." The speaker's lack of logic was what annoyed me most. He was trying to extort money from me. I already knew that these people had often come into contact with whites, who had visited them and photographed them out of curiosity. This group, therefore, already touched by civilization, was almost worthless for my purposes.

I shut the camera abruptly and moved away with the Malay. The dwarfs gazed after me open-mouthed. I would have nothing to do with them, especially the vice-*kepala*, who was one of the forest guards appointed by the Government. Berkeley employed Semang as forest guards to catch Malays, and even Chinese, stealing timber, and they were very well suited to the work. This vice-*kepala* was one of these and carried the certificate of his appointment with him in a bamboo reed. I was already on the other side of the stream when the other men began to abuse their vice-*kepala* for having robbed them of their presents by his interference.



As a shower of rain was coming down, we took refuge in my guide's dwelling, where I intended to wait in the verandah for the rain to stop. To my astonishment, three Semang appeared a little later in front of the hut. They were holding over their heads, as umbrellas, huge leaves, which afforded them some protection against the rain. They wanted to be photographed. As the rain had slackened a little I obliged them and rewarded them handsomely.

In the evening I slid my way back to the town hall along the slippery path. The Malay followed me with the specimens we had obtained on his shoulder.

On this first journey of investigation I had always before my mind one concern, which I should like to make clear. Everywhere, among Whites, Malays, and Semang, I sought news of Hrolf Vaughan Stevens, a traveller who, more than thirty years before, had set out to study the Semang, under the auspices of the Berlin Museum. Captain Berkeley remembered very well this sociable man, whom he had met in Lenggong. He had also seen him in company with the Semang, coming out of the forest and talking with them at every opportunity. Otherwise I met no one who remembered him, not even among the Semang. It was Berkeley's impression that, however large a talker Vaughan Stevens may have been, he was certainly not a liar. I was therefore all the more surprised when my Malay companion told me of a white man called Tuan Jabo who had a hut in Ijok and had had a great deal to do with the Orang-Utan. That was about thirty years before, when he himself was a boy. It remains to be seen whether this Tuan Jabo is to be identified with Vaughan Stevens.

With the visit to the group in Ijok I had finished this part of my investigations. I had from personal observation learned something of forest life and could prepare myself accordingly for a longer stay.

### III

#### IN RAMOGN'S CAMP ON THE BERSIAK

**F**OR several reasons I decided, after my return to the coast, not to embark immediately upon my preparations for the journey to the Jahai of Bersiak, as I had first intended, but before doing so to pay a visit of some length to Siam. It was already known that there were Semang living in Siamese territory, though up to that time no European had come into contact with them. My journey took me to Bangkok, the capital of Siam, and then into the districts of Patalung and Trang, where I also fell in with the curly-headed people. This, however, did not cause me to depart from my purpose, which was to begin my investigations in Bersiak.

When I made my way into the interior, I was not a little anxious as to whether my friends from the Bersiak would still be there. I was accompanied by a Tamul from Further India whom I had hired in Pulau Pinang as servant and cook.

With Berkeley's help I had soon collected some Malays to take me and my baggage along the river towards Bersiak. I had even a table, a chair, and a camp-bed, luxury which I had to give up on subsequent journeys. With cloth, beads, knives, mirrors, and other trifles, I was well equipped and I was building great hopes on these presents.

Accompanied by the Malay Puteh, I made my way along the already familiar path to Kuala Këndrong, while my baggage went by ox-wagon.

On the way we fell in with a Semang with his blow-pipe. Puteh pulled me aside into the bush, where, close to the edge of the path, stood an encampment of three huts, Puchok's camp! And so, after a month, I met the old man again. He

was just returning from Grik, where he had been buying a few trifles. This time he was a changed man. He told me that Malays had warned him against me and that it was for that reason he had fled, with his people.

The Semang were just then passing through bad times. The rice harvest was over, so that there was nothing to hope for from the Malays. The forest seemed to produce little in April and hunger was rife. The result was that the Semang had scattered in all directions, in small groups, to make foraging easier. I therefore found hardly anyone in the encampment, and it was the same at Gandar's, who lived not far from Puchok, close to the bank of the Perak. On the other bank of the Perak I discovered another equally small camp whose inhabitants were also scattered in the forest searching for food.

Half-way to Bersiak we paused again to visit a group of Orang-Utan, whom a Malay from the other bank had called in to help in the fields.

Up to our knees in mud, we waded through endless rice fields, and finally, at the edge of the forest, we met a solitary curly-head, who, in his youth and inexperience, showed great confusion; nor did he know the Malay language very well. He led us into the undergrowth where the solitary shelter stood. A strapping young woman lay asleep on bamboo sticks with her knees drawn up, and at her side an infant wriggled, wailing peevishly. The woman took no notice of it. I was about to turn away when the young man pushed her with his foot. The woman looked sleepily up, sprang to her feet in a panic, seized the child, and disappeared into the forest. Such was the effect of my visit! She could not have run away more hastily from a tiger.

In Bersiak I again took up my quarters in the rest bungalow. The same evening I heard from Lisa that in the meantime my friends had moved on. Here also the rice harvest was at an end. Ramogn and his people were living a few miles upstream.

In order to induce the Semang to return to Bersiak, I set out the following morning accompanied by Lisa to look for them in the forest. Lisa had an approximate idea of their whereabouts. He repeatedly struck a tree with his bush-knife so that the sound echoed far into the forest. Soon we heard a shout from the undergrowth and Sēmambu's curly head emerged. When he saw me he hesitated and seemed at a loss. In the end we followed his lead and soon reached the camp, which stood on a hill above us. All the shelters were still green and therefore could not have been built more than a few days.

The dwarfs, startled by my arrival, required time to collect themselves. In the end they agreed to my suggestion that they should go back to Bersiak, for they were obviously very hungry.

Jelei, Těko, and Sēmambu brought me back the same evening by raft to Bersiak, the others making the journey the following morning.

It did not occur to the people to reoccupy the old camp they had deserted. New huts of foliage were built near the old site. Within a few hours the encampment of eleven shelters was ready, men and women sharing the work together. The building of huts is really the woman's work. While the women hurried off to cut the *hapoi* (a kind of rattan leaf similar to the leaf of the cocoa palm; in Malay, *chachuh*) and drag it to the camp in bundles, the men cut suitable sticks for the framework of the huts. For a line they used one of the *hapoi* leaves they had brought in, laying it on the ground. Along this line three sticks were driven into the earth by their sharpened ends, at equal distances. The upper ends were bent down slightly and fastened to the scrub by rattan or creeper thongs which had been torn somewhere from the bush, so as to form an arc. To prevent the collapse of the framework, forked sticks were used to support the lower ends about 30 centimetres above the ground. Then work on the roof could begin. The women had meanwhile



KINDLING FIRE WITH RATTAN (p. 43)



EMBARRASSMENT (p. 55)

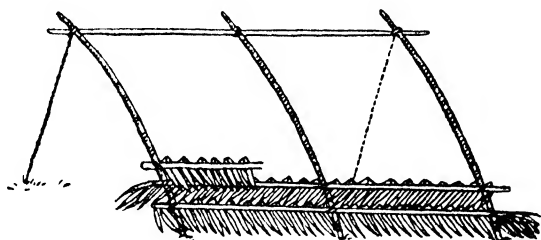


BY BOAT TO THE ORANG-UTAN (p. 54)

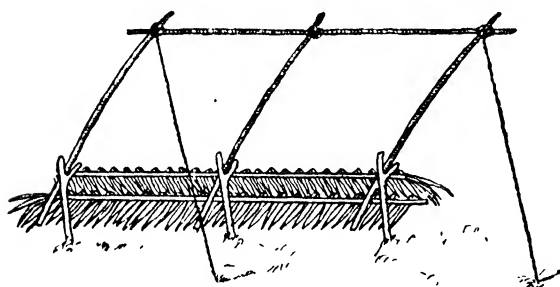
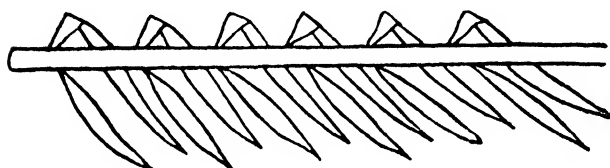


RAMOGN'S SHELTER (p. 63)

busied themselves with the individual leaves, which they doubled back along the midrib, and so formed a fairly weather-proof roof. The work was begun from the bottom, in many cases above the forked supports. The leaves were placed so close together that each midrib was only three centimetres from the next, the successive rows of leaves being always



FRAMEWORK OF SHELTER FROM OUTSIDE



FRAMEWORK OF SHELTER FROM INSIDE

laid in opposite directions. Each new leaf was linked to the next by means of another leaf. Sometimes a stick or bamboo of corresponding thickness was laid across the three supports about half-way up. This was done only to strengthen them. Then the shelter was ready. Its elasticity has the further advantage that the roof can be raised or lowered according as protection is required from the sun, rain, or wind.

This simple covering does not always suffice to keep off the rain. The women therefore throw further foliage on to the roof and hold it all down with bamboos or branches so that the wind cannot lift it off. On the inside of the roof large broad leaves are carefully inserted under the framework wherever a ray of light comes through or the rain penetrates.

In the meantime the men had been cutting bamboos to sleep on. Those who were not fastidious simply arranged the split bamboos in rows, with one end resting on a thick branch underneath, and that was all. Others, who set more store on comfort, drove forked sticks into the ground and on these laid a cross-beam upon which the bamboos were placed. But this was not enough. As a substitute for a sleeping mat, which it would have taken several days to make, the Semang split bamboo so skilfully that, when the projections have been removed, they take the place of a mat, or at least a board. The bed is often covered with these bamboo boards. Still greater artists in life, especially the young men who sleep together under one shelter, construct their couch on a frame about 40 centimetres high; while the girls, who sleep somewhere in their parents' hut, have very inferior beds.

Where the adult youths build their own hut they must themselves provide the foliage roof, without any female help. Often, however, they live in the shelters of their parents.

The shelters in our camp were arranged in a circle. Of course there were irregularities necessitated by the lie of the land. Two huts, that of old Bersiak and another belonging to his daughter who lived alone, lay outside this circle. In all cases the huts stood facing one another, mostly only from two or three metres apart. Sometimes the shelters are so close together as to form gabled, or tunnel-shaped, dwellings. In such cases the roof is made specially thick and the supports of the framework are vertical.

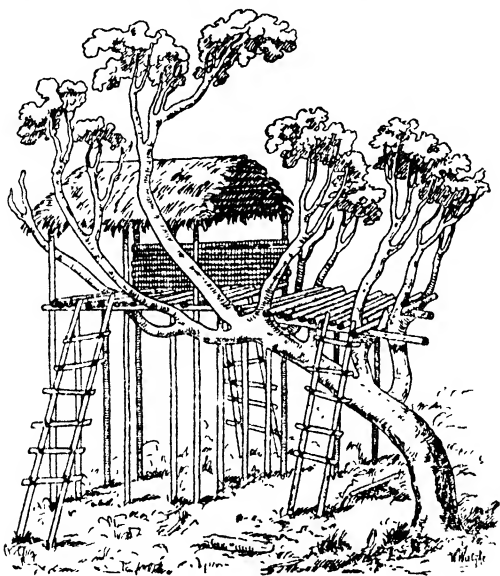
The sleeping-places are arranged with their head to the main supports. If there are others under the same shelter—



as always where there are children—they are set apart, often with the foot towards the parents' bed. The fireplaces are placed on both sides of the main sleeping-place, with the children's beds grouped around them.

Often the shelters are lengthened by having one roof over-running the next, thus forming a composite shelter.

It is hard to say what circumstances finally determine the choice of a new camping-ground, or how a group reaches an



PILE-DWELLING

agreement about it. As a rule, the oldest member of the group takes the initiative by setting up his shelter where he thinks fit and his grown-up children settle round him.

It is the custom among the Semang to begin by lighting a fire on the spot selected as a new camping-ground. If the smoke rises straight into the air the place is favourable, but if it trails through the bush there is risk of tigers and another place is sought.

When marching through the forest one often comes across tree dwellings. These are never built by the Semang, but always by Malays, who, if they are surprised by night on a

journey, fix up some sort of protected platform at the top of a tree. Often huts of this type are also used by Malay hunters watching for game by night.

These are distinct from the large tree huts which are used as refuges from elephants. These again are not made by the Semang, although they are occasionally found among them. The Semang are not tree dwellers, but tree dwellings are found in elephant-infested districts among the Malays and Sakai. A pile hut generally stands close up against a large tree. High ladders lead up to it from different sides, for it stands on posts so high that an elephant passing below cannot touch the hut floor. If the animal seizes the supporting posts, the inhabitants escape to the platform resting on the neighbouring tree, to which a small bridge leads from the hut. I never found any huts of this type among the Jahai, though I did among the Sabun.

The Bersiak encampment comprised eleven shelters, which were ready within a very short time. In the centre there was room enough for the erection of my hut. We had agreed that I was to live among these people day and night, at my pleasure. The Jahai kept their word, for when I entered the encampment the following morning the framework was already built. I was to have something rather better than the others, a small pile hut. Poles were laid across forked posts driven into the ground as a base upon which to lay a floor of bamboos. This floor was covered with *karob*, i.e. the split bamboos I have already described. The gabled framework for the roof rested on tall poles, the rafters being bamboo canes broken in the middle and bent over the roof beam. While the roof was being erected two men had plaited *hapoi* into great leaf-mats which were laid over the rafters and made fast with rattan. Walls of *karob* and a bamboo staircase completed the erection and I was able to move in. I had a view of the camp on all sides and could watch the little people at their occupations. I accompanied the expedition into the jungle to fetch the *hapoi* for my hut. Under the

slope of a hill thickly grown with *chachub* Ramogn and Jelei halted.

The pair sat down on a rotten tree trunk and began to split rattan. This reed coils itself like long lianas over the ground. With the *taji* (the knife used for the purpose) the reed is split lengthways into two halves, which are further divided into two or three strips and cleaned of pith. This is how the toughest binding material of the tropics is made; a task not arduous but tiresome, and calling for care and skill. The youths dragged the *hapoi* to the bottom of the hill, where it was tied into bundles and carried to the encampment to be woven into roof mats. The women next break off the leaves at one side and remove the thorns. The men lay the leaves side by side at a distance of about three centimetres apart, but all in the same direction, and weave them skilfully into mats with rattan. The mats are then rolled in bundles and put aside ready to be hoisted to the roof and laid over the rafters.

The weaving of *hapoi* mats and splitting of rattan are the chief occupations of the Semang. From time to time they appear in the Malay kampongs to sell or barter these products.

Little by little we began to get used to one another. Only the children and the dogs, which always greeted my appearance with loud barking, avoided me.

The sick came to ask for medicine. Old Bersiak complained of headache. I gave him aspirin and told him to take it with water. Although I took some, to show him how, he refused to imitate me. It was the same with another man to whom I offered medicine for his child, who had fever. True, they wanted medicine, but it must be for rubbing on, not swallowing. It was a considerable time before anyone could accustom himself to swallowing quinine.

As we sat together—the women always apart—I was plied with questions such as I had never heard among the Africans, among whom I had lived years before. The dwarfs were more eager for information and more alert. They inquired eagerly

about my family circumstances ; whether my parents and brothers and sisters were still living, and why I had deserted my wife. When I told them that I was not married, they were very astonished, and when I added that I did not want to get married they all laughed aloud. The little people never believed that I was unmarried. When, later, one of them came to Grik, to take me and my baggage into the interior, they surprised me in the act of turning over the leaves of a magazine. The pictures delighted them, especially one large picture of a woman. That must be my wife. The first thing they related in the camp was that they had seen my wife. It was impossible to dissuade them of this.

I had regarded the Semang as dirty folk who never washed themselves. This I had read, and at first I thought it was true. It was, however, only a few days before I learned better. Before long I saw a woman bathing her baby ; a delightful picture ! It was about noon and the jungle was hot. The mother stood the child before her, held it by its little arm to prevent its falling, took a bamboo filled with water, and douched the grinning Orang-Utan. The vigorous rubbing that followed only produced sounds of delight. A few days later there was a general washing of all the babies. Three mothers soused their offspring with water, which the latter with screams of protest tried to ward off with their hands. I often stood on the river bank with men, women and children and watched them. The Bersiak Jahai were good swimmers, and in the warm summer season often plunged into the deep water. It was very amusing to see the mothers repeatedly ducking their children and rubbing them with their hands. The women never bathed in my presence, and the men always kept their loin cloth on while bathing if I was there.

Neither the Semang nor any of the other tribes I came to know were afraid of water. They bathe and wash with enjoyment, except in the early morning, when it is still cold ; and then it is fear of catching cold that prevents them, not any liking for uncleanness.

The encampment was outwardly a unit, but in reality it was divided into two sections which it took me several weeks to distinguish. The one comprised pure-blooded Jahai families, while the other had an admixture of Sabubn blood. Originally they spoke two distinct languages, but here Jahai supervened.

Ramogn, called by the Malay Pa Ramogn (Father Ramogn), was the chief, though not the eldest, because the encampment stood on his land. He had built his shelter at the head of the camp, towards the river, so that when he sat or lay there he had a view of all that was going on. His shelter was also the best and largest. Pa Ramogn, a man of sixty, was a genius as a mechanic. He was generally busy with his own work. I scarcely ever saw him enter anyone else's hut, though his companions often visited his. He would come to see me from time to time, ask a few questions, handle one or two things, and ask what they were for.

He was an expert at making blow-pipes and was the only smith I met among the Jahai. There was another, whom I never had an opportunity of meeting, living deep in the interior of Tadoh.

Ramogn's wife, a robust matron, was as industrious as her husband. She made a great fuss of her eldest daughter's little girl of three, who was being brought up by her grandmother, her father, after her mother's death, having taken another wife, the younger sister of the first. The child lived in her grandparents' hut.

Ramogn and his wife were both toothless; *Jenhurl*, the Jahai call it. This is a handicap when it comes to eating tough tubers or chewing the sweet sugar-cane. Neither of the old pair could bring themselves to renounce the sugar-cane. Whenever a stalk had been acquired from the Malays by labour or barter, the young people would quickly cut off a piece, peel it, chew it with gleaming eyes, and swallow the sweet juice. But Ramogn had a way of his own. He constructed a special machine, a sugar-cane press (*hapit menbed*).

He lashed the ends of two levers together, inserted the sugar-cane between them and pressed the other ends together. The juice dripped into a cocoanut shell. I watched him doing this one evening and noticed him take two good pulls at the shell and then pass it to his toothless wife, who did the same, with relish and then gave the rest to her beloved granddaughter, who, by the way, was already busy chewing the sugar-cane. That was Pa Ramogn's supper. He then laid himself contentedly upon his couch, stirred the fire, and puffed his cigar. The tobacco, the most coveted luxury of the Semang, had come from my trunk.

Pa Ramogn I had taken to my heart, and I enjoyed lingering, as I often did, under his shelter. Once when I was sitting there and Ramogn was making a bow for me, his wife was cooking a vegetable. She had borrowed from the Malay an iron pot into which she cut the heart of a reed plant called *bimkam*, and then, to give a spice to the flavourless root, added a large quantity of Spanish pepper, which she had previously ground in a little wooden mill. Meanwhile others were baking green bananas at the open fire, wages earned from the Malays.

Ramogn's favourite was his youngest son, a fresh-looking, wideawake child who imitated his father's every action. His name was Bunga (flower). When the father had cut the bow into shape, the little fellow cut himself a toy bow of bamboo, wielding his father's big bush-knife. His father had often to come to the assistance of the little boy, who was only five years old. Or the little fellow would sit on the ground with his friend, the boy with the broken arm, while they decorated each other with a kind of beads which they cut from juicy white and red grasses. It surprised me to see how this boy followed his father about everywhere in the forest, whereas he made little fuss of his mother.

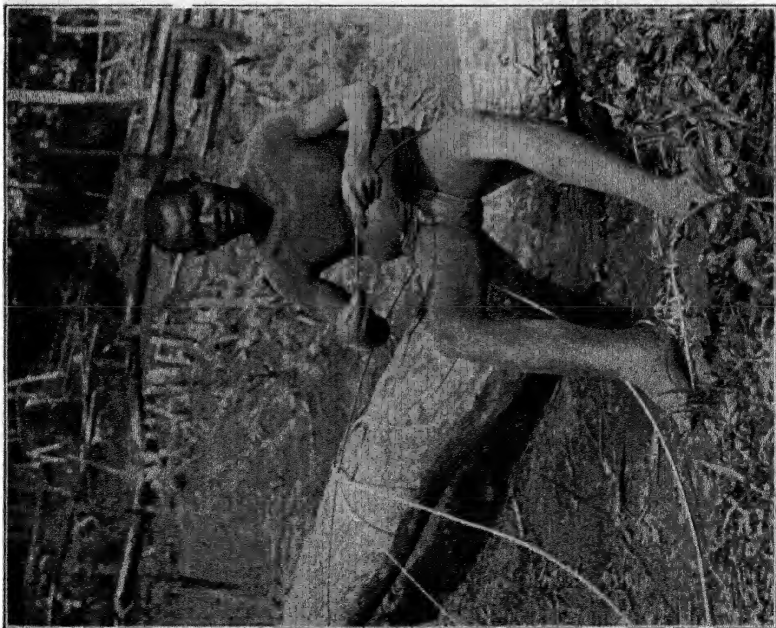
Besides this boy Ramogn had three sons and two daughters, and one daughter was dead. Next to Ramogn's hut was that of his son Sēmambu, which he had built in conjunction with Chago. Sēmambu was a shy youth, while his friend Chago,



WOMAN SUCKLING A MONKEY (p. 69)



KELADI FROM THE TELADN AND CHAGO (p. 74)



SPLITTING RATTAN (p. 61)

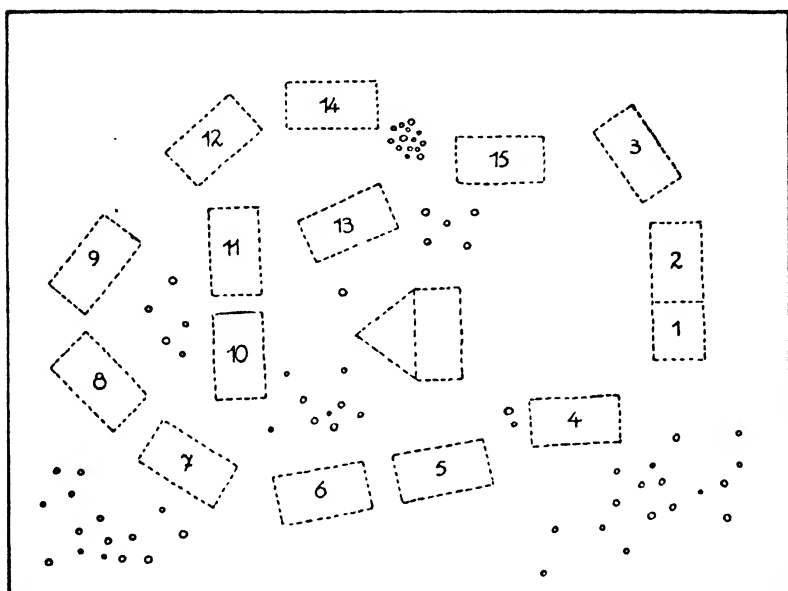


CHAGO'S MOTHER AND SISTERS (p. 66f)



who was of the same age, was the reverse. His father, a Sabubn, was dead; his mother and sister lived under the neighbouring shelter. Chago was half-Sabubn, half-Jahai; and spoke the language of the latter. He had a cleft upper lip through which his teeth showed. A tiger had inflicted this wound during his childhood.

Sēmambu and Chago were inseparables. I fitted them



THE BERSIAK ENCAMPMENT

1. Ramogn. 2. Chao-Sēmambu. 3. Berie. 4. Kēladi. 5. Jelei. 6. Tēko. 7. Hake. 8. Tajen. 9. Tajen's mother. 10. Burong. 11. Tebu. 12. Bersiak. 13. Lemo. 14. Bersiak's daughter. 15. Lei. Author's hut in centre.

both out with new loin cloths and wanted to make them my servants, but after a few days I had to give up the idea, for neither had any idea of punctuality. They preferred to go their own ways and came when they chose or did not come at all. One night a great festive dance was held in the open place before my hut. The young people squatted on the ground while I sat on the platform in front of my hut. Before long the worthy pair climbed up and sat beside me.

Sēmambu, characteristically silent, stood in front of me so that I could lay my arm over his shoulder, in which position we watched the dance.

Pa Ramogn, who was sitting on my right, told me confidentially, and in obvious distress: "Sēmambu is ill; he will die."

"What, that strapping youth die?"

"He has *pachog*, and anyone who has *pachog* is bound to die."

I did not, of course, know what *pachog* was. Ramogn explained: "The last time he was out cutting *hapoi* there was a thunder-storm. A flash of lightning came down close to Sēmambu. Since that time he has had a shooting pain in his chest. A splinter of the thunder wedge, which is the lightning, stabbed him in the breast and now he must die. There is no cure for that."

"Oh yes, there is," I replied. Then I took from my medicine case the first good salve I came across, and vigorously rubbed the boy's chest with it, saying deliberately, "Now you are healed of the *pachog*." This soon settled the matter.

I guessed it to be some sort of rheumatic pain which could be removed by suggestion. Two months later I learned how successful my cure had been and how greatly this incident had raised my reputation. As in the meantime I had two further cures to my credit, my repute as a doctor was by then even more firmly established.

I was once coming with several bearers into Ramogn's camp, which meanwhile had been moved to another spot. On the way I had killed with a shot-gun some flying foxes, a welcome bag for my bearers. When I was sitting under my shelter I heard Sēmambu's mother saying to another woman: "There's nothing strange about the *gob* (stranger) bringing down three flying foxes with one shot. He's a great *hala* (medicine-man) and has even cured my Sēmambu of the *pachog*!"

Then Chago's mother, a middle-aged widow called Berie,

came into the hut of the two boys. After the death of her husband she had married Jelei, Ramogn's eldest son, but had later parted from him. She now lived with the children of her first marriage, a daughter rather younger than Chago, a slender, timid creature the exact opposite of her brother, and her third child, the boy with the broken arm.

As a result of her marriage with Jelei, old Ramogn was her father-in-law and was not allowed to speak to her, and Berie's children, even after the separation, called Jelei father.

These three shelters stood in a row at the head of the camp. Forming an angle with Ramogn's on the left was the home of Kěładi, Ramogn's second son.

Kěładi's hut was, according to custom, separated from Ramogn's by a space of about five yards. Father-in-law, daughter-in-law, or mother-in-law and son-in-law are not allowed under any circumstances to speak to, or approach one another.

This is a law of Karei, and woe to him who transgresses it ! The sin is followed by a mortal disease, the *chemam*. One afternoon, when I was standing with several of the men on the bank of the Perak and questioning them about this curious mother-in-law problem, I asked one of them : " What would you do if your mother-in-law fell into the water ? Would you pull her out ? "—" No, never ; I should let her drown, for I am not allowed to touch her."

When, therefore, Ramogn came to my hut, he would make a detour round Kěładi's, as Kěładi's wife was also obliged to do when she went into the forest. If the grandmother wanted to have the child, and Ramogn was in the hut, the father would bring it over. The women never entered the shelter when the father-in-law was in it. No law is so strictly observed among the Semang as this mutual avoidance of parents-in-law and children-in-law of opposite sex.

Kěładi's close companion was his elder brother, Jelei, who suffered from elephantiasis. Both his legs were so swollen that it was impossible for him to walk far. He used a strange

medicine to obtain relief. Green stems of the *sēmamu* (malacca cane) were frayed and the leg was bound in these splinters as high as they would go and so tight as to stop the circulation. He left these bandages on the leg until he felt relief.

Jelei already had a second wife, Serei, who was lithe and slim and had refined features. She was separated from her former husband, Lemo, whose hut stood opposite. Serei had a boy of about four, whose father was Lemo.

Jelei was obviously very fond of his wife, whom he decked with all kinds of beads and frequently teased, she responding with affectionate digs in the ribs.

Why Serei had parted from her first husband I do not know. There was, however, no kind of feud or ill-feeling between the two. Their child slept in the father's hut, but spent the day, sometimes with the father, sometimes with the mother. It was the darling of both, and both fed it generously. The child suffered from violent croup, which caused it to breathe with difficulty. During the conversation at the dance I have mentioned, Ramogn pointed to the child and remarked that it would certainly die before long. As it turned out the old man was right.

Adjoining Jelei's shelter was that of Těko, who was a conscientious father and in the mother's absence went humming about the camp with the youngest child on his back.

Forming an angle with Těko's, and directly facing Ramogn's hut, was Burong's, with a sleeping-place raised high above the ground. His wife, an industrious woman, like Burong himself somewhere in the forties, was a great chatterbox. As she had no children of her own, she occupied herself a great deal with those of others, and was constantly fondling them. Burong, for his part, had a monkey, which he fed and with which he spent a good deal of his time. Besides this fully-grown monkey, which ran about round a bamboo to which it was tethered, there was also a young *lutong* ape belonging to Kēladi. A young animal like this, unable to feed itself, is suckled by

the women of the camp. I often saw a little monkey, jealous of the child at the breast, push it away to get the milk, or a mother with a child at one breast and a monkey at the other.

One morning Pa Ramogn brought home from the forest a sucking pig. As it was too young to feed itself the women



JELEI'S SHELTER

undertook the task of suckling this too. Unfortunately both the pig and the monkey died, because, it was thought, the women had not enough milk.

An animal suckled in this way is not killed for food when it grows up. Ramogn explained that he could not find it in his heart to hurt such an animal. It may be given away or sold to others, who can do as they like with it ; but none of

the owner's tribe may kill and eat it. I wonder whether this is a primitive form of totemism?

One species of monkey, the *běrok* (cocoanut monkey), is reared with special care, because it is eagerly bought by the Malays, who train it to climb the high cocoanut palms and bring down the day's supply.

Next to Burong's hut, and forming a continuation of it, stood Těbu's, a man still young but delicate. Being very weak on his legs, he always walked with a crutch. As he could not keep up with the rest on journeys of any length, he always remained with his family some hour's journey behind. His wife, a dear, pretty little thing, the mother of three children and very devoted to her husband, was always very cheerful, in spite of the fact that, owing to her husband's ill-health, she had to make the chief contribution to the housekeeping. Even Těbu wandered about the forest with his blow-pipe to kill game, but as he moved so slowly he was always alone. Těbu and Burong's wife were sister and brother and were Jahai. Burong, on the other hand, a son of old Bersiak, was a Sabubn. At right-angles to Burong's home Lemo, his younger brother, had built his, quite close to mine. The Malays called him Sěrdadu, "excellent marksman," because with a breech-loader he never missed. He was a small, insignificant looking man, but quick-witted and enterprising.

On a later occasion I found Sěrdadu alone under a shelter he had erected in the neighbourhood of a Malay village. I expressed astonishment at his solitude, suspecting that some trouble had arisen in the encampment. This, however, was not the case. He was merely tired of wandering about, because he could never get enough to eat and his family had to go hungry. He now intended finally to put an end to this by sowing a rice field, with which he was then busy. He had certainly sown the rice; whether he ever reaped it I do not know, for a few weeks later I found him back again among his companions. The Semang can never remain long away from the forest; it always calls him back. Sěrdadu's wife, by whom

he had two children, was Těko's sister. A third child I have already mentioned was the boy who suffered from croup. The poor little fellow was always sitting beside his father, who was extraordinarily devoted to him and was always slipping food into his hands. During the first days of my stay in Ramogn's encampment I could not make out Lemo's relations with Serei. The boy divided his time between the two; they were his parents, yet each was living with another. I suspected the Semang of practising polygamy until I discovered that Serei and Lemo were separated. The separation, however, had not left any ill-feeling.

Lemo's present wife was a silent creature. One day when she had hurt her toe badly with a bamboo I bound the wound. The following morning, to my surprise, I found the bandage had already been removed. She had been careless enough to eat salt, which, she thought, would make the wound worse. A cure was therefore out of the question, I was informed by Sěrdadu, and for this reason the bandage had to be taken off.

Lemo's neighbour was his brother Lei, or Hala, as he was called by the Malays. He was bigger than his brothers Burong and Lemo and very reserved, not to say suspicious. In any case I hardly ever came into close contact with him. Moreover, he was fonder of idling than the others. Whether he was naturally lazy or whether he had a privileged status in the encampment—he was indeed a kind of medicine-man—I do not know. His present wife was Ramogn's youngest daughter, by whom he had two children. His first wife was her elder sister, whose child, after the mother's death, was being brought up by the grandmother.

The three sons of old Bersiak had each a different mother, for Bersiak had had a succession of several wives, who, so he said, were all dead. Bersiak, who was over seventy, was now a widower. He lived under a shelter behind Lemo's. As he was almost blind, wandering in the forest was difficult for him, and he would trudge slowly along the paths,

leaning on a long stick. As a rule he joined Těbu, who also went slowly.

Bersiak had formerly been an important man whose word carried weight among the Sabubn. He was in addition a *bala* (medicine-man), and appeared to have bequeathed this office to his son. Bersiak was a man of moods who, in spite of his age, could be in the best of spirits and then again monosyllabic and suspicious. This suspiciousness may have been the result of his blindness.

Often he would get up and give an exhibition of his dances; Malay dances of course, for dances by men are almost unknown to the Jahai and Sabubn. His grotesque contortions always caused great amusement.

But at other times he would be difficult to get on with. Whenever any bitter or unfriendly feeling arose in the encampment Bersiak was involved. But the first responsibility always rested with Bejuan.

One morning when I appeared in the camp, I found it deserted by all adults save a few women, old Bersiak, and the children. The dogs rushed out making a fiendish din. Losing patience, I threw a bamboo log at one cur. By accident the bamboo fell near Bersiak, who was dozing on his bed. The following day I was astonished to see the old man rousing the other inhabitants of the camp against me. Although the matter was soon cleared up, Bersiak avoided me for a long time, less because of my misdoings than because he had slandered me.

The last hut in the encampment was occupied by Bersiak's daughter, a middle-aged, peevish woman, who was always sitting by herself. I never spoke to her. As Těbu's children were often to be seen in her shelter, but never Těbu himself, I concluded rightly that she was his mother-in-law.

Now that we are acquainted with all the members of the camp it will be obvious why Bersiak and his sons were living among the Jahai. They had married Jahai women, but had not fully identified themselves with Ramogn's people, from

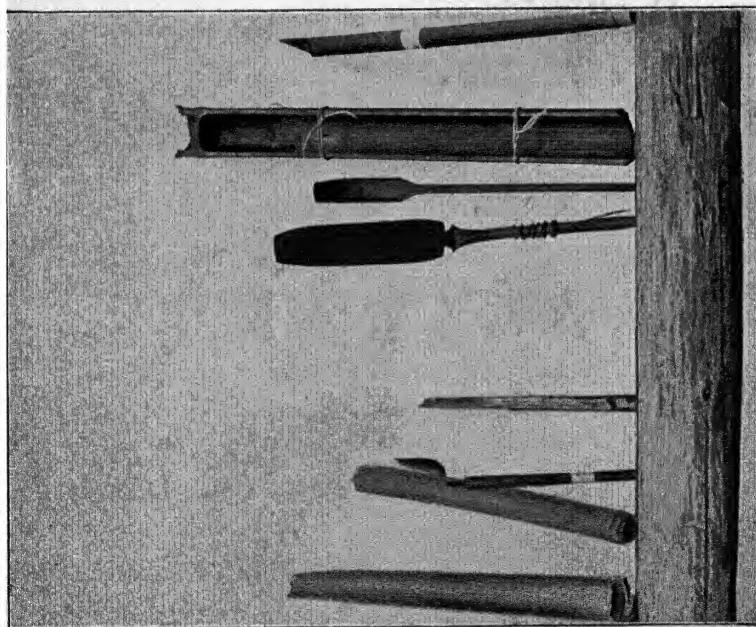




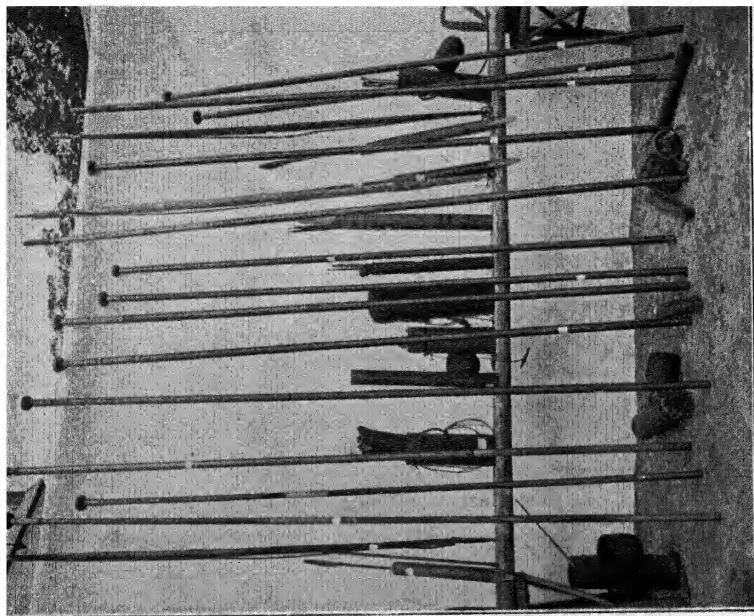
THE WOMEN SOUGHT EMPLOYMENT WITH MALAYS (p. 75)



KELADI SHOOTING WITH THE BOW (p. 77)



LEFT: INSTRUMENTS USED FOR THE BLOOD-SACRIFICE  
RIGHT: INSTRUMENTS USED IN PREPARATION OF POISON



THE UNIVERSAL WEAPON OF THE SEMIANG—BLOWPIPES  
(p. 77)

whom they occasionally separated to live a life of their own. Ramogn was not particularly fond of the Bersiak family—they were parasites who were only too ready to live upon his labour. Once he told me this openly, when we were visiting the little *hubi* plantation which he had laid out, assisted by his sons. None of the Bersiak family had taken a hand in the work of clearing the forest and planting, but, Ramogn complained, they would be there when it came to eating it. When I suggested that he should send them about their business, the old man made no reply. A Semang can never bring himself to drive people away.

Indeed, during the first few days of my visit the camp was enlarged by three huts. Some people from the upper Perak, who usually wandered along the Banugn river, erected their shelters among us. There was no question of asking permission. They were just there: Hake with his wife and child, Tajen with his wife and a grown-up boy, and Tajen's widowed mother. All were Jahai.

But that was not all. One fine day a fresh horde cropped up around me, the Jahai from the Teladn river. They pitched their camp not far from the rest bungalow, where I had stowed my baggage and where I partly lived. This invasion of such a large company made me anxious, for I should have to provide them with presents. I also feared rivalry between the two camps.

The official leader of the camp was Bejuan. Although a Sabubn, he had married a Jahai and had been appointed by Berkeley *penglima* of the Jahai. Through the *penglima* Berkeley sought to influence the Semang by inducing them to plant *hubi*. His efforts were partially successful.

On the appearance of the Teladn group, I found myself obliged to take up permanent residence in the rest bungalow. From here I could visit the two encampments in turn. I often had as many as a hundred of these dwarfs around me, and so enjoyed excellent opportunities for pursuing my investigations. I gradually began to pick out those of superior intelligence, and

with these endeavoured to get into closer touch, so as to learn as much as possible. I discovered repeatedly that not all, especially among the older people, are necessarily well equipped to act as instructors to an investigator. The reason for this is, not that the older people are less well acquainted with the customs and habits of the tribe, but that they lack the gift of imparting their knowledge. Words do not come readily to their lips, they are awkward in expressing themselves and in their grasp of things, while with other, often younger people, sympathy and alertness made up for their possibly defective knowledge. Kēladi from the Teladn was particularly well adapted for my purpose. His ability and excellent character I had soon discovered. I had had good hopes of Bejuan, but he turned out a complete failure.

If the two were with me together and I addressed my questions particularly to Bejuan, Kēladi would relapse into silence. Once Bejuan was away, however, the words would pour from Kēladi's lips. He would tell me everything that Bejuan had not known and not infrequently corrected what Bejuan had told me. As this happened repeatedly, and other information I had from Bejuan did not always ring true, I became suspicious. Enquiry revealed that Bejuan was not a Jahai, but a Sabubn who had lived many years among the Malays, and moreover had not a good reputation.

Bejuan was not clever, but he was crafty and a great talker, the result of mixing much with the Malays. When, finally, he demanded payment for the time he spent with me, I dropped him. After that he tried to turn the others against me. With old Bersiak and his family he had some success, but not among Ramogn's people, nor with the Jahai from the Teladn, to whom he stood in the position of *penglima*, but who completely ignored him. This unpleasant situation gradually came to a head. The more I showed my preference for Kēladi, the rarer Bejuan's visits became.

A visit to the encampment of the new arrivals from the Teladn could not fail to be worth while. The camp lay close

to the path leading from Bersiak to Temėngor. A narrow path led from the main route to the encampment, which consisted of several shelters arranged in a circle, and so close together that there were only two openings through which the encampment could be entered. The most important people of the encampment were, after Bejuan, Kėladi with his young wife, Bunga, old Pa Loa with his wife and a boy, Kunyit, who suffered severely from *puruh* (a painful skin disease), his wife, a robust, vigorous woman who was Kėladi's sister, and three jolly little boys, one of whom unhappily was also infected with *puruh*. In addition to these there were others.

The women sought work among the Malays of the kampong. For a handful of rice they would trample and winnow their rice crop. Often their only reward would be some green bananas. The men, too, tried to earn something, making bamboo fences or splitting rattan. Others, again, like old Pa Loa, wove sacks and baskets out of *pandanus* for their own use or for sale. Others, again, made blow-pipes, cut poisoned arrows, or went hunting.

For my own part I had plenty of work to do during my two months at Bersiak. I was able to measure the people, study their language, watch them at work, and listen to their talk.

The means I employed to keep the people so long in the one place was to distribute rice among them once a day. I was also very ready to give presents for every service done for me ; small mirrors, knives, glass beads, which I bartered for specimens and with which I paid my teachers. Sometimes I would sit in Ramogn's encampment, sometimes with old Pa Loa or at Kėladi's.

As I had already mentioned, Pa Ramogn was the only Semang blacksmith to be found far and wide. I had bought from him a fine bow and arrow and was having other things made by him. Not every kind of wood is suitable for making a bow ; the best is that of the *langset* tree. On one excursion into the forest—I was with Pa Ramogn, Sėmambu, and Chago,

collecting *ipoh* poison—we came upon a small *langset* tree which Ramogn thought well suited for making into a bow, especially as it was slightly curved. Sēmambu cut it down under Ramogn's instructions.

Sēmambu split the tree, which was about as thick as an arm, in such a way that the curve remained, and at once began with his *parang* the first rough work of cutting it. When we were home again Ramogn set to work. He whittled it with his *taji* (knife) until the bow assumed the required shape. He constantly tested its resistance by placing one end on the ground and bending it back. Finally he was satisfied. He then made a notch at each end and strung the bow, against its natural curve, with a thong of twisted bast.

The following day, with Kēladi's help, he forged two arrows from an old *parang*. A large boulder served as anvil, and large leaves as bellows to fan the fire. As he had no tongs, the iron was fixed into a piece of wood. The hammer was a piece of iron fitted on to a handle of liana stem. The forging of the brittle iron cost him a great deal of trouble, as it was continually breaking off. When he had finished forging the arrow-head, he cut the barb with his *parang*, hammering this with a heavy stone. The arrow-heads, of which he made two, he drove into thin bamboo shafts, binding shaft and head firmly with rattan. Then he cut the notch in the near end of the shaft and fixed the feathers. These, which were from the rhinoceros bird (the feathers of the *burong lang* are also used), were split in two, cropped close to the quill with the *parang*, and bound to both sides of the shaft slightly away from the notched end. Scientists have often racked their brains to discover why the Semang crop the feathers so close, as in this state they cannot control the flight of the arrow. Moreover, when, on examination, Semang arrows were found to have feathers sloping forward, several experts were forced to the opinion that the Semang had no conception of the principles of arrow feathering, or that the feathers were thus arranged

for some purpose of magic. Ramogn, however, fixed the feathers in the correct direction. Later, I did meet another Semang who fixed his feathers in the reverse direction. When I asked him the reason for this arrangement, I received a thoroughly satisfactory explanation. "If I shoot the arrow at a wild pig, the feathers whirr through the air, the pig stands transfixed by fear, looks round, and is hit," he said. The feathers whirr because they are cropped close; they whirr still more when turned in the reverse direction, owing to the vibration caused by wind resistance.

A bow and arrow require to be supplemented by a quiver. For this a thin bamboo is selected. It is sharpened from the knot downwards, to allow of its being stuck into the ground during the hunt, so leaving the hands free for handling the bow. The upper part of the quiver, below the upper knot, is cut smooth, cleaned out, and perhaps ornamented.

To-day the bow is an almost obsolete weapon among the Semang. The Jahai were the only tribe among whom I came across it, and yet two generations ago it was in general use, as the present generation still remember. The bow had been the only weapon of the Semang, and it had been adopted by a section of the Ple. From the Ple the Semang, in their turn, took the blow-pipe. This exchange is still within the memory of both tribes. I met men among the Ple who were able to use the bow, but they stated definitely that they had learned the art from the Jahai.

To-day the universal weapon of all the Semang is the blow-pipe, which the Malay call *sumpitan*, the Jahai, and indeed all Semang, *belau*.

Although this highly efficient weapon has been acquired from others, all Semang know how to make the blow-pipe, provided they have the necessary bamboos at hand. The particular bamboo (*bambusa wrai*), called by the Jahai *temign*, grows only in certain areas and at certain elevations. The blow-pipes are up to two, or even two and a half metres long, and consist of two reeds, the actual tube and a protecting

tube. The inner tube is a slender, single bamboo without knots. As, however, reeds of this length are rare, two reeds can be put together and a slightly broader bamboo fitted round the joint, or—as among the Kěnsiu—the bark of a species of willow, this being fixed with resin. To straighten the tube so formed, it is held over the fire and held straight until it is ready. To this inner tube a mouth-piece cut from wood, or more rarely, horn, is fitted by means of a small bamboo tube. To protect the inner tube, it is covered with an outer one, made in two pieces and usually decorated. The blow-pipes of the Semang are generally more efficient and more attractively worked than those of the Sakai. As missiles, the Orang-Utan uses small darts, which he carries with him in a richly ornamented bamboo quiver. One knot is left to act as a bottom to the quiver, the other is cut off clean, and a cap made of plaited rattan is fitted over the mouth and tied with bast to the rattan ring encircling the quiver. Many Semang groups also use a thin quiver without a cap, the darts being generally prevented from falling out by a small bast bag. Such quivers are more quickly made and more convenient to carry; they can be stuck into the girdle, as is also done with the arrow quiver.

In the quiver are to be found, in addition to the darts, all kinds of other instruments, *e.g.* a spoon, a thin bamboo with cap for holding poison, a lot of little bamboo reeds hung on strings in the manner of blinds, and other things. These small reeds contain the darts. If no reeds are available, long rattan leaves are placed in the quiver, and the darts pushed in between them.

The darts are very delicately cut from the rib of the *běrtam* palm. These much-feared missiles are scarcely 15 centimetres long, and are as thin as a darning-needle. One end is stuck into a cone of pith running to a point, and so made that it fits exactly into the inner tube of the weapon. The other end is sharpened to a fine point and notched about two centimetres from this point, so that when a hit is made



the point breaks off and remains sticking in the quarry. What makes the dart so formidable is its poison.

Semang know only one kind of poison, that of the *ipoh* tree, a kind of upas which they call *dog*. As on several occasions I went with the Semang to collect and prepare the poison, I am well acquainted with the process.

Ramogn took us into the dark forest to a huge *ipoh* tree distinguishable by the many scars in the bark. This was where he obtained his dart poison when he was in this district, and it was to him that the many gashes in the tree were due. With the aid of his companions, Ramogn erected round the tree a scaffold of branches, which he bound together with lianas. He then climbed up on this structure to reach a height where, up to then, there were only few cuts, and tapped it by making further gashes in the bark. Several auxiliary channels ran into a main channel, which led the white poisonous sap to a leaf stuck to the bark with clay, from which it dripped into a bamboo placed below. While the bamboo was filling, Ramogn searched the forest for edible roots, and the ever restless Chago cut creepers, the severed ends of which he held over his open mouth to catch the water dripping from them. One more way of quenching thirst!

We brought the half-filled bamboos back to camp and at once set about the preparation of the poison. There was enough for all the inhabitants. After the white sap had been poured into a split bamboo, it was scooped out with a blade of bamboo bark, and a flat wooden spoon was smeared with it on both sides. This spoon, constantly turned, was held over a blazing fire until the juice had congealed and adhered, now dark brown in colour, to the wood. While the stuff was still soft—over the fire it becomes glutinous,—the point of the dart was stirred in it once or twice and the darts were laid down for a quarter of an hour, to dry in the air. With this, they are ready for use. With a quiver of thirty to fifty darts, the hunter is equipped for a week.

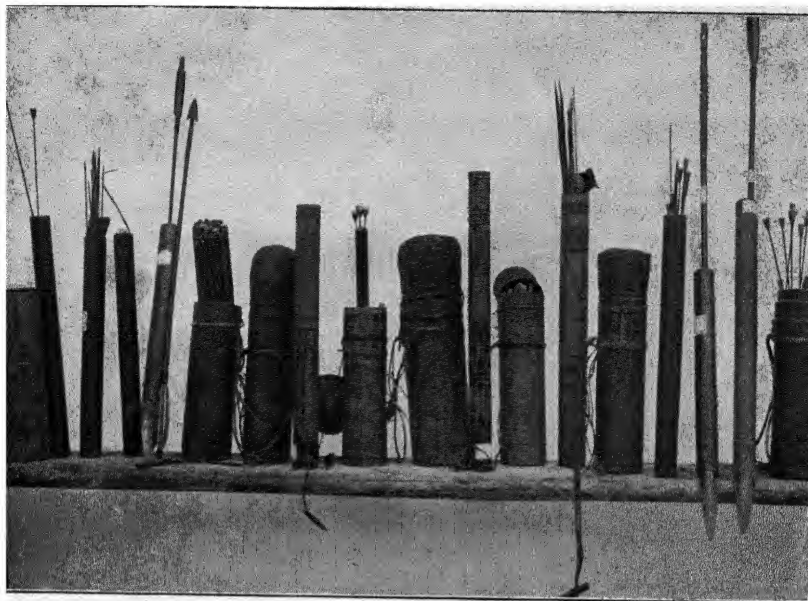
The poison is most effective when it is fresh, for with age

it gradually loses its potency. An animal the size of a monkey, hit by a fresh-poisoned dart, falls from the tree within two minutes. In Siam I saw a lemur hit by a poisoned arrow, high up in the tree crest. Five minutes later it fell, with its young one at its breast; the latter, of course, still alive, as it had not been wounded.

Birds are more difficult to shoot, as they continue to fly for a time after being hit and generally cannot be found. Moreover, the effect of the poison is slower in the case of birds. I made some experiments with a fowl, but, though I hit it twice, it had to be finished off with a kitchen knife. When I asked Pa Loa to explain this, he laughed at me. He said a hen could not be killed with *ipoh* poison because it ate earth. For the same reason many other birds, he said, could not be brought down. The eating of earth is, according to the belief of the Jahai, an antidote against *ipoh*. On the question whether the poison was harmful to human beings when swallowed, the Semang were of divided opinion; they had no experience to go upon. The smell of *ipoh* is certainly harmless. In wounds the poison is thought to be dangerous even for human beings, and a wound from a poisoned dart is much feared.

The Semang are very good marksmen. With the end clasped in both fists, the lips firmly round the mouth-piece, and eyes fixed on the quarry, they hold the long blow-pipe without any support so steadily that misses are rare. The dart lies at the end of the tube near the mouth-piece. Some woolly material pushed in behind the cap prevents the dart from falling into the mouth, and at the same time adds to the force of the puff, as it prevents the air from escaping past the sides of the cap. A pop, a whirr—and the dart has struck the prey sitting innocently in the tree, thirty or fifty yards, or even further away.

Joy and sorrow always go hand in hand in life, and so it was during my life in the forest. The Semang's confidence in me had grown. I was still the *gob* (stranger), but a respected



DECORATED QUIVERS FOR BLOW-PIPE DARTS (p. 78)



THE SPOON IS HELD OVER A BLAZING FIRE (p. 79)



CUTTING THE IPOH TREE FOR POISON (p. 79)



IN RAMOGN'S CAMP (p. 79)  
Smearing dart heads with ipoh poison.

one they were pleased to have among them. I continually slipped little presents into the hands of the crippled Těbu, and almost every noon he stood beside me and chattered like a true child of nature.

"If a *gob* should come to cut off my head, am I allowed to send a poisoned arrow into his body?" he asked me one day. "Certainly, why not?" "Good, then I will," and that was the end of the matter.

"If you come to us again, *Tuan*, it is good for us to be here. But if you bring another man with you, you will certainly find us all gone." And so Těbu would chatter on, eating the rice my cook had placed before him.

One day Ramogn heard that his *hubi* plantation had been wrecked by an elephant. This distressed the Orang-Utan greatly. It was said that the plantation was completely devastated, only a few roots at most could be saved, as the elephant had paid several visits and done its work thoroughly. I was sorry for the old man, who had lost his crop of tubers. The blame, however, was placed, not on the elephant, nor the carelessness of the men, but on none other than myself. "If you had not come and brought us out of the forest to amuse yourself with us here, my plantation would not have been wrecked. What am I to eat now?" Ramogn asked in despair, gazing over my shoulder. This turn of affairs annoyed me, as at the time I knew nothing of any plantation belonging to the dwarfs. If they had called my attention to the danger, I should certainly have settled near their plantation to help them watch it. As it was, I consoled myself with the thought that the affair would soon blow over, and the forest, with its roots, assured me that the Orang-Utan would not die of hunger.

A few days later a party were setting off into the forest to cut *hapoi*. I went with them to watch. Spaces had been cleared under shady trees, to which women and men dragged great heaps of *hapoi*, to weave with rattan in the usual way into mats.

The children were sitting contentedly, and very silent, apart in the forest, hidden by the undergrowth. "What are you doing there?" I asked little Bunga.

"Making *hanya* (huts)," he answered, meaning that they were playing house.

They had made little shelters (*hanya*) in exact imitation of the big ones, and sleeping-places of bamboo. There they were, sitting in families, man and wife, all with lighted cigars in their mouths. The fire was burning on the hearth and they were going to do the cooking. They had all decked themselves with flowers and foliage. It was noticeable that there were no polygamists among the youthful husbands.

For the night a huge shelter was built in which there was room for us all, about thirty people. I ate a few tubers and a little tinned fish, and tried to sleep, but this I found impossible, as the smoke from the hearth fire made my eyes smart and Kéladi's little girl whined all through the night. She was cutting her first teeth, a process which the negrito child, like others, greets with howls.

The next morning I set off, on an empty stomach, for the plantation, accompanied by Ramogn, Kéladi, Burong, and little Bunga.

Under a tree the party came to a standstill and gazed intently into the tree-top. A monkey, they said, was sitting there, and Burong was already taking aim with his blow-pipe. Falling fruit betrayed its presence, but Burong did not get a chance to shoot it. By a small stream we halted, and silence was called for. All eyes examined a freshly made trail in the sand. To me it looked like human footprints, with the ball of the foot and toes heavily marked. Ramogn, however, clenched his right hand with the bent fingers spread out: the sign of the tiger among the Semang! So we had a tiger ahead of us! Less than an hour before it had followed this very path that we were using. We went on, but my companions never took their eyes off the trail, until eventually it branched off to the left, while our path con-

tinued to the right. These paths, scarcely recognisable to the inexperienced, the Semang seem to use without difficulty. Even the Malays are unable to follow them.

When I asked him to whom the forest really belonged, Ramogn answered proudly: "It belongs to me, from Bersiak almost as far as Kuala Temėngor. Here we have our *ipoh* and *durian* trees." And so I learned that property is not communal. Each grown male has one or more *ipoh* trees and several scattered *durian* trees which are regarded as his personal property. Thus Ramogn had three poison trees in this district. His *durian* trees stood on the other side of the Perak, not far from Bersiak.

Where a family has established its claim to trees, there is its home. The Semang does not wander at random in the forest, but remains, as far as possible, within the boundaries of his own territory, though he can pass these and settle temporarily in another's territory. The Jahai from the Teladn had done this when they occupied Ramogn's area. But this was only temporary, for a few weeks later they returned to their own. The individual groups wander within the tribe's boundaries, but always return to their family territory, especially at the time of the *durian* crop. So it comes about that individual tribes are named after definite districts.

The right to use the *ipoh* and *durian* trees is confined to the owner. He shares the produce with the others, but no one would dare to cut another's *ipoh* tree, or climb a *durian*, uninvited. Fruit lying on the ground, even within an enclosure, has no special owner. Once when I was staying in Kuala Temėngor at the time the *durian* was ripe, Kėladi from Teladn heard a fruit fall to the ground. At once he clambered the bamboo fence into the Malay's garden and fetched it. I remonstrated with him and accused him of stealing, but found myself in the wrong. The fruit was lying on the ground and was therefore public property.

Clothes and implements are personal property, and cannot

be borrowed without permission. The women, too, have a personal right to everything they make for themselves; the shelter is the woman's property. When a pair separate, the man leaves the hut and seeks, or builds himself another.

Food is eaten by the family in common. Even when the women have brought in enough roots from the forest, or when each family has rice, meat, or game, it is nevertheless divided among all.

Each family contributes from its own food, already cooked and prepared, to every other family. If one family on any particular day is unusually well supplied, they give generously to all kindred families, even if it leaves them with too little. If other families not belonging to the group are in the camp, they do not share, or only to a very small extent, in the distribution. It is therefore quite justifiable to speak of a kind of communism among the Semang, but it is only family communism applied to food.

On our way Bunga came upon fresh elephant tracks. They were those of a solitary animal. It is generally known that no animal is so fierce and destructive as a solitary elephant. They are bulls which are not tolerated in any herd. We followed the trail up the hill, and from the height overlooked the bare slopes. The destruction was clearly serious. All the *mandioka* bushes were torn up, the sugar-canes eaten, the hill trampled over. Ramogn and his men spent a long time digging about in the field with stakes, many of them collecting a few remaining roots. Ramogn was depressed, and bewailed his bad luck. I decided to compensate the old man, to whom, after all, I owed so much, by a considerable present.

On the way home we separated, Ramogn and I turning off towards the river to return to Bersiak, while the three others hurried to the *hapoi* ground.

Ramogn was carrying home the scanty product of his plantation, a little *hubi*, and his expression soon brightened. We passed a place covered with the tracks of wild pig. The



air swarmed with sandflies, which forced their way into our eyes, noses, and ears, until we were almost suffocated. Ramogn shouted: "Smoke! smoke, I tell you!" He walked unconcernedly in a dense cloud of pests, while I made off as fast as I could. From that day I made a habit of smoking in the forest.

I was completely exhausted, for I had hardly eaten anything all day. My system was in any case weakened, for the change of diet in the forest did not suit me. I constantly lagged behind to rest. Ramogn further relieved me of my camera, and he never tired of consoling me and cheering me on.

He talked a great deal on the way, and was again in one of his good moods. He lauded me to the skies: "When have we seen a *tuan* like you before? You live among us, sleep among us. You do not despise the food we eat. With us you go through the forest to watch our work. The other *tuans* travel with elephants, but none ever came among us into the encampment; we always had to go to them."

Ramogn was right, but he had no idea how anxious I was to watch these people's mode of life.

The long weeks of solitude, however, did not leave me untouched. My spirits flagged and I longed for a change. How gladly, therefore, I welcomed the news that Father Cardon was proposing to visit me. Soon some of my best men were on the way to Grik to bring him over with his baggage. It was a reunion in the forest! Great and small collected from both camps to see the *Jangut* ("Long-Beard"). The children slunk timidly back when he spoke to them, and when they had to take a present from him there was an outburst of screaming. None of the little ones would venture up to him. The mothers kept their hands outstretched, but the children screamed with all their might, turned their faces away, and kicked like fish on a hook.

Father Cardon was tired after his journey, but nevertheless he hurried out with me the same afternoon to view the

two encampments. Things which to me had already become commonplace were of great interest to him.

His cheerful, buoyant personality soon won him the hearts of all the adults. Even the crippled Těbu changed his attitude. Instead of decamping with the others, as he had threatened to do a few days before, he spent most of his time squatting beside the visitor, talking to him in Malay.

In the evening we went over to my airy villa, where we were to spend the night.

We sat under the shelter, our feet dangling, and watched the encampment. Burong's monkey was sitting up above in the bamboo and stared in terror at the stranger's long beard. Cardon "shooed" him away, and with wild screams the animal vanished among the topmost branches.

"*Toreador, now guard thee,*" my visitor began to hum as he watched with interest two little fellows who were engaged in a wrestling-match below us, of course unasked. As befits wrestlers, they were mother naked. They were tugging at a stick, and trying to pull it away from one another. Their arms outstretched, legs wide apart, and feet planted firmly on the ground, they struggled breathlessly, their muscles standing out. Our shouts of encouragement and a gathering of grown-ups around them drove them to yet further effort. It was soon apparent that one was the superior of the other in strength. The other, however, was crafty. To spare himself the humiliation of defeat, he stuck one end of the stick into the ground and could then defy the efforts of his opponent. The battle was left undecided and each received a present as reward.

A hearty laugh from Cardon made me look in the direction in which he was pointing. A suckling child had just performed a very human action. The mother held her darling up and called the house dog, which dashed up eagerly and licked the child clean. It is one of the duties of the Semang dogs to keep the camp and the children clean, and as they are given hardly anything to eat they are kept in good fettle for the work.

It must be made clear, however, that the grown-ups are very particular about personal cleanliness. In this they show to very great advantage beside the Malays, who openly use the rivers as latrines, a thing the Semang never think of doing. Within a wide area round the camp everything is always clean and above reproach.

In the evening we tried the rice which Jelei's young wife had cooked for us in a bamboo, and this was followed by a generous meal. On that day nothing was wanting. Scarcely had night fallen than the dance began. The "*cluck-clock . . . cluck-clock*" of the bamboos beating the ground throbbed monotonously through the forest. For a long time we watched it, until at last the people dispersed. The fires were damped down and the encampment gradually relapsed into silence.

The people were already asleep, and we ourselves were under our mosquito net, when the sound of distant thunder reached my ear. It was the first storm of the new season. In spite of the rumbling thunder, I, too, went to sleep, but only for a brief period, for the rain dripping through the roof on to my face woke me. The thunder was now rolling continuously. A crash, as though the earth beneath our feet was bursting asunder, made me jump up. Terrified, I looked out into the blackness of the night. At that moment the camp fires burst into bright flames, as the smouldering embers were stirred into life. Women were running from one hut to another. "*Ogn! Ogn!*" (Water! Water!), Burong kept shouting into the darkness. What had happened? I could not account for the turmoil in the camp.

I strained my eyes to see into the space around me, and could make out women standing in the streaming rain, and executing all kinds of strange movements. Suddenly a thought flashed through my mind: *blood sacrifice!* I had already read about these sacrifices, but had so far never witnessed the ceremony. With one bound I was in the open, heedless of the cascade of rain, watching Těbu's wife, who, with a splinter of bamboo (*abag*), was stabbing her shin until

## 88. AMONG THE FOREST DWARFS OF MALAYA

the blood poured from it. In her left hand she held a bamboo filled with water, into which she wiped off the blood. She then poured the mixture into a split bamboo and sprinkled a little of it upon the ground. Then she raised herself and began to scatter the blood and water in the air, once in the direction from which the thunder came, and then towards every quarter of the heavens, crying as she did so : “ *Chub ! Chub !* ” (Go ! Go !)

Unfortunately, I had missed a good deal of the ceremony, as I had been taken by surprise. When it was over, the figures squatted motionless round the camp fire. The thunder drew away beyond the Perak, but the rain continued to pour down. In about half an hour the thunder had ceased. But it was not long before the terrific racket broke out afresh. Jelei, who was still warming himself by the fire, shouted angrily into the darkness : “ *Ola, bërenti pai !* ” (Ola, cease !) as though ordering the thunder to cease. As I learned the following morning, the blood sacrifice is always consummated when the thunder crashes directly over the encampment. First the women draw blood from their calves with a bamboo, or with the knife used for rattan splitting. Some of the mixture is then poured on the ground ; this is dedicated to Manoid, Karei’s wife. That which is scattered in the air is for Karei, the thunder-god, himself.

These brief explanations certainly did not exhaust the subject, and did not entirely satisfy me. Burong stated that the blood ceremony is first performed by the women only, and by the men only when the thunder does not stop. Nevertheless, I had observed individual men drawing blood from themselves, together with the women, and scattering it to heaven. I hoped at the next opportunity to go more thoroughly into the matter.

Father Cardon had brought with him, among all kinds of trifles, an accordion. As he regarded my life in the forest as soul-killing, he thought this instrument would help to cheer me up. But, as it turned out, the thing served much more



THE SEMANG ARE VERY GOOD MAKSMEN (p. 80)



A KENSIU WOMAN WITH FINELY CURLED HAIR



A BEND IN THE RIVER AND MY GUEST WAS LOST TO VIEW (p. 85)



WOMEN WEAVING RÜCKSACKS

for the amusement of the Orang-Utan than my own. At the first notes they all rushed up and squatted round me to enjoy the entrancing strains. In the end it was passed from hand to hand, each drawing a note from the instrument. A squeeze, a squeak—and in terror or disappointment it was passed on. Later, some of them repeatedly took up the instrument, but the enthusiasm and charm of novelty soon waned, and the accordion remained lying in a corner.

On the day before Father Cardon's departure we had a talk about the dwarfs. Like myself, he was anxious to learn something of their origin. I had already asked repeatedly for information on this subject, but without success. I made another attempt. This time I received the following reply : "In the beginning all men were Malays. Then came Raja Bėrok (the raja cocoanut monkey) into the land and kindled a great fire with a brand he had stolen from Karei. The fire raged in the *lalang* grass (savannah grass). In panic, the people fled before the fire. Part of them ran to the river, boarded rafts, and went downstream. These people were the Malays of to-day. The other part were more dilatory and fled into the mountains and the forests. As a result of their dilatoriness the fire reached these people, so that their hair was singed. These were our forefathers. For this reason they now live in the forests, are the Orang-Utan, and have curly hair."

Tėko, who had also been listening to the narrative, pushed out his lips, knitted his brows still lower over his dark eyes, and said : "Our forefathers were fools !"

Father Cardon was delighted with my dwarfs. He would have been glad to remain longer, had he been able. But he had still before him the joy of a raft journey on the Perak. Ramogn built the vessel for him, which, laden with specimens, slowly glided over the murmuring waters. A bend in the river, and my visitor was lost to view.

The visit had a beneficial effect on old Ramogn. He himself accompanied "Long-Beard" as far as Grik, where

Cardon rewarded the bearers with his usual generosity, Ramogn also receiving his portion; though Sēmambu, Cardon's favourite, received the lion's share. This, and what I had given him in compensation for his devastated plantation, made him forget even the dismal affair of the elephant, and his spirits were completely restored. His altered mood was very clearly revealed soon after his return from Grik.

He entered the encampment in the afternoon. As I was in the habit of walking barefoot about the encampment, I had left my shoes near the bamboo steps. They caught Ramogn's eye. With childish delight he pushed his feet into them, and amid tremendous noise started a clog dance through the camp. I had never seen the old man in such high spirits. When he had danced himself out, he placed back the shoes where he had found them and sat down quietly in his shelter.



## IV

### THE JOURNEY TO BĚLUM

**B**ERSIAK was a very appropriate place in which to begin my studies. It lay in the interior of the forest, and yet was in touch with civilization, for Grik could easily be reached from it. I was able to obtain weekly supplies from Grik, so that altogether my life was quite tolerable. As no white man ever came near, I had no company, Father Cardon's visit being an exception. I was therefore thrown back entirely on my relations with the Orang-Utan, the few Malays, and my cook, a Tamul from Further India. He cooked and I ate, but we never became friends. He was as black as coal, and made the Jahai look quite fair beside him. Although we were in the wilderness, he combed his luxuriant hair several times a day, as if he had been going to a wedding. In the night he used to grind his teeth so terribly that it sent shivers through me, and I had to ask him to find other quarters, as I did not want to be disturbed during my well-earned slumbers. The sound of his grinding teeth still grates in my ears even to-day. The dark forest night, in which we slept alone in the rest bungalow, exaggerated the horrible sound. But he could not be induced to change his quarters, for he was too great a coward to sleep alone. Every day the stupidity and vanity of this fellow was made more and more evident.

Once, when I sent him out with Hitam to shop in Grik, he returned, as arranged, the following evening, bringing me a bigger mirror than I had ever used in my life, and three umbrellas of Chinese oil-paper, such as are used all over Malay. "What's all that for?" At my involuntary question he only grinned impudently and said: "Because we haven't any." I sent two of the umbrellas back at the first opportunity,

and the third I have never used. The mirror, however, he himself used, morning, noon, and night.

One morning he served for my breakfast nothing but black coffee. I asked for sugar. He grinned at me and said: "*Habis!*" (Nothing there!). I asked for bread. "*Habis!*" was again the grinning answer. From that day I named him Habis, as I did not then know his real name. Later, I learned that he answered to the name of David. Habis, alias David, was so utterly stupid that he could not reckon whether the supplies would last the day or not. Had we been further inside the jungle, I should have starved in Habis's company.

The Semang themselves had no respect for him, so I was glad when a Malay began to devote his attention to me more and more. He was that fat fellow who had made so unpleasant an impression on me during my first visit to Bersiak.

He was called Lebai, was a Korinchi from Sumatra, and had been living for years with his brother, Hadji Mali, in Bersiak. He performed many services for me, bought rice for the Semang and fetched necessary things from the kampong, especially fruit for my kitchen. I let him have his own way, till in the end he became indispensable. After two months he himself asked permission to accompany me. He was willing to go with me anywhere, regardless of wages. He said he had no one else to care for. While I was learning the native language he was of great service.

To get into touch with a people without understanding something of its language would be difficult. In the case of the Malay dwarfs, the Malay language formed a bridge, as most of the men spoke Malay. Malay, therefore, was the means through which to study the native language. It was my ambition to learn the Jahai language so well that I could use it in talking to anyone and record information about the views and customs of these strange dwarfs in their own tongue. The learning of the language was also incumbent upon me as an ethnologist for its own sake, for, apart from a few very incomplete vocabularies, practically nothing was

known of it. From the first day of my stay in Bersiak I devoted myself with the energy of the novice to the study of Jahai. I should prefer not to describe how I got on ; it is enough to say that in the first few weeks I almost despaired of success. I could not even discover the pronouns, which I regard as the keywords to any language. I would often sit with one man and take notes, and then call up two others I thought the most intelligent, and then again I would sit in the midst of the whole tribe ; and all the time I would keep repeating : " I, thou, he, we, you, they." It is at first so difficult to adapt oneself to the mentality of the primitive peoples, and yet that is the key to accurate research. Such work requires, above all, patience ; and my patience was beginning to give way.

I asked Jelei : " What do you Jahai say for ' I ' ? " at the same time, to make it more clear, pointing to myself. He said "*Pai*." If I asked him for " Thou," pointing with my finger to him (Jelei), he answered, "*Ie*." I pointed to a third and said, " He." Again he said, "*Pai*." I carefully noted down *Pai*, *Ie*, *Pai* (I, thou, he), and then began the same thing afresh with Kĕladi. I used the Malay expressions, saying " I, thou, he," without pointing to anyone. The answer was : "*Ie, pai, O*." The two contradicted one another. The questioning then began again, with explanations, dumb show, and interpreting. What was I to make of it ? The discrepancies and contradictions could not be cleared up. How was I to explain it to them ? It did not help at all when I took a verb and asked : " I go, thou goest . . ." Later, the thing became clear when I realised that the people took less notice of the Malay expression than of the sign I was making with my fingers. When I asked Kĕladi : " What is : ' Thou goest ' ? " pointing to him with my finger, he answered promptly : "*Jechub*," which, however, means in reality, " I go." As I say, it took me some time to follow this line of thought. More tedious and exasperating was the signification of the plural pronouns. I worried myself and the people

sometimes so much that they would slink away when they noticed that I was beginning to lose my temper.

When I asked for "We," I got sometimes "*He*," sometimes "*Ie*," and again "*Hei*," and even "*Ia penh*." I could not make any sense of this. For a long time I did not solve this difficulty, until accidentally I discovered a dual form. At once I divided the group. In one place there were two, in another several. Yes, that was it, though not quite. A few days afterwards the last veil fell aside. I noticed that the Orang-Utan made a much finer distinction in the pronoun than we do. They spoke of "We" and "Us" in the inclusive and exclusive sense. If anyone said "We," he meant all who were present, either including or excluding the person addressed. There were distinct expressions to be learned for the two forms. The discovery of the pronouns was, of course, an achievement of the first importance to me. Afterwards I mastered the other difficulties more easily. Jahai had become, for me, the standard language by which I could fix my methods in learning the other native languages of Malay.

The Jahai do not count above one, which they call "*Nai*." In so far as there are any other numerals, they are taken from Malay. The Kenta, Kěnsiu, and Sabubn, however, count up to three.

The Semang languages are well developed and comprise a rich vocabulary as long as one is dealing with things among which the Semang is at home. For objects in common use and often repeated functions, they have different linguistic shades of meaning. For many ideas, of course, there is no expression whatever.

Among themselves the Semang speak only in their own language, whereas in dealing with the Malays they speak Malay. I met at most three Malays who understood Semang. Years of using the Malay language has, of course, brought into the Semang vocabulary a large number of Malay words, which have even occasionally supplanted Semang words.

Side by side with a large number of observations which I

made daily among this people, I had slowly acquired a grounding in Semang science. Together with the rudiments of their language, I gradually learned also their outlook upon the universe. To begin with, my inquisitive questions concerning religious views, the thunder-god and the soul, always met with a brief "I don't know," or "We don't know that," whereas later I was able to fill dozens of pages of my notes with these things. For instance, I remember very distinctly how, during my first visit to Bersiak, I asked about their method of burial, and the fate of the soul, and was distinctly informed that when a man is laid in the grave he simply rots away. There was no question of a soul; there was no such thing. After death, all is at an end. They denied decisively any fear of touching a corpse or a grave. What the Semang really believe, however, will be recorded later.

In Bersiak I also gained a fair idea of the geography of the Semang tribes. The Orang-Jëram were called in their native language Sabubn or Lano, and inhabited the area reaching from Bersiak, on the near side, and from Temëngor on the far side of the Perak as far as Lenggong and the Sungei Plus. The Jahai, again, were to be found as far as Këlantán, where they had their centre in Tadoh, and north-east as far as Kedah, in the Jarum area. Those who were called by the Malays Orang-Bukit were known by the name Ple or Sëmai, and were said to be the southern neighbours of the Jahai and Sabubn. This information aroused in me the desire to establish accurately the territorial boundaries, and I planned a journey into the interior, the first stage being to Belum, about eight days' journey from Grik up the Perak. The Jahai called this place Belubn, which was also in their language the name of the Perak. As it was very important to me to get to know as many negrito groups as possible, I decided to change my headquarters. Ramogn's people were also tired of remaining in one spot. One day, at last, they disappeared without a word of farewell, though the following evening two boys did come and tell me where the new halting-

place was. I did not go, but arranged with Kēladi from the Tēladn, and with Pa Loa, the trek to the Tēladn river, where the group were thinking of laying out a plantation. Bejuan, who had completely broken with me, parted from his group and joined Bersiak, who had pitched a new camp apart from Ramogn.

I hastened to the coast, obtained supplies for a long journey, and a week later was back in Bersiak. As my second servant I chose Lebai, who gladly attached himself to me. He came with three Jahai as far as Grik to fetch me and my baggage. In Bersiak there was no longer a single dwarf to be seen; they had scattered to the four winds. I made my first halt in Ramogn's camp, close to his ruined plantation. I recognised the hill where Jelei had told me on the first journey that I should be able to eat *hubi* on my return.

As it was beginning to rain, a shelter was quickly erected for me under which my baggage was stowed just in time. The roof of my modest hut leaked, so that there was little chance of sleep. To crown all, a thunderstorm came up in the evening. The noise that had broken out among the people after my arrival was silenced. I tested the various shelters, and could not suppress a smile when I saw the anxious faces. Mute and with bowed heads, they cowered under their roofs of foliage. I had already long known that the Semang have an incurable fear of thunderstorms, which they use to frighten naughty children. When, one evening, the children were making more noise than usual, Burong's wife called out to them: "*Pen un, pen un, men min Karei lawaid!*" (If you play like that, it is a sin against Karei!) which means roughly: the thunder will strike you. Immediately the children were silenced, and dispersed.

This time the storm spared us and passed to the south of the Perak. The celebrations were soon renewed and were kept up until midnight. Sēmambu, Chago, and a visitor from Temēngor sang one song after another, waltzed about, giggled, and did all sorts of absurd things. In the interests of truth,



OLD PA LOA (p. 103)



IN THE MIDDLE STOOD A FINE LARGE HUT (p. 108)



THE ENCAMPMENT CONTAINED A LARGE NUMBER OF  
CHILDREN (p. 109)



CHENBIS, THE BEST RAFT BUILDER AND NAVIGATOR AMONG  
THE SEMANG (p. 128)



I must not conceal one prank which shows Chago in a less favourable light.

Once when I was in a Chinese shop in Grik, buying small presents for the Orang-Utan, three youths were with me. While I was selecting knives, mirrors, girdles, etc., I saw Chago put away a small mirror. This was too interesting for me to pass over in silence, so later I called him to account for it. He answered only by a wry smile. That is the only case of theft that came under my observation among the Semang ; in fact, it is unknown among them. The chief reason is that there is very little individual property. What one has, his neighbour has also, or at any rate can easily obtain.

Chago was also a libertine, which I cannot say of any of the others. Once he asked me to help him to get a wife. He had cast an eye upon the sister of Kĕladi's first wife, but he thought he could not marry her straight away, as he was afraid of being beaten by Kĕladi. When I answered, in jest, that the girl would not marry him because he was too ugly, he defended himself and stated that he had already had relations with her once, in secret, outside the encampment.

When on another occasion several youths were together in my rest bungalow and Chago used some lewd expressions, Chembis remarked to him roughly : "*Lawaid Karei !*" (Sin against Karei). Chago relapsed into crestfallen silence.

The visitor from Temĕngor in the encampment was Chago's brother-in-law. During my short absence on the coast this youth had married Chago's sister. I had therefore missed the marriage ceremonies. For the time being he was living in his mother-in-law's shelter, in order to lay out a plantation for her. The young wife was in the encampment of her father-in-law in Temĕngor. It is customary for the son-in-law, after the marriage, to stay for about two years near his father-in-law and work for him. Only then does he finally return with his wife to his father's encampment and attach himself to him. From time to time, however, he appears in the camp of his father-in-law to help him with the daily needs, while he has

his permanent home with his father. This was the case here. The man from Temėngor was staying here to work for his mother-in-law.

It cannot be said that marriage is preceded by any prolonged acquaintance. The pair usually belong to two different groups, who often live many miles apart. They know each other, of course, and there is an understanding between them. Sēmambu was very anxious to get married, but not every girl would suit him. I drew his attention to several girls with whom he would have nothing to do. He had one in mind, Pa Loa's daughter, who to my taste was far from being a beauty. She usually lived about forty miles away from Sēmambu. When, during my stay on the Těladn, I asked the girl whether she would like to marry Sēmambu, she opened her eyes wide with delight, and cried: "Oh, certainly!" Sēmambu was indeed a fine-looking young man.

I know definitely that love marriages do occur among the Semang. I do not, however, believe that all marriages are based on love. However that may be, all marry by mutual agreement, without any compulsion on the part of the parents or anyone else. Kěladi gave me the following information on the subject of marriage.

When the youth has come to an understanding with the girl, he tells her father and gives him all kinds of presents, which may be of a very heterogeneous nature; generally a few bush-knives, some cloth, and a tinder-box. He marries the man's daughter with the father's consent. The pair then go off for a few days alone into the forest. They erect a shelter somewhere, go hunting and searching for food, cook, eat, and love. After two or three days they return to their people as a married pair.

Should the woman leave the man because she does not wish to live with him any longer, the father-in-law must return the presents made to him, or replace them. In this the Semang are very reasonable. A man who has much gives much; he who has little gives little, as the son-in-law did at the marriage.

These marriage gifts are therefore a pledge which keeps the pair from separating without good reason. Should the man leave his wife, however, he forfeits all claim to the presents he has made.

I am bound to oppose emphatically the current view that the Semang unite for life. I have drawn up some statistics with regard to the young married men, which establish that more than half had already married for the second or third time. I found this to be true of all the Semang tribes that I visited. When I asked old Gandar how many wives he had already had, he answered with a certain bitterness that he did not know, but certainly he had had many, very many. Then he let himself go on the subject of the gentler sex. They came, only to leave again ; they would not stay, they liked change. The men were different. True, Gandar was childless and that was really the reason why he was unfortunate with women. As a rule the married pair remain together when they have children. I came across two exceptions among the Sabubn and the Kenta.

The Semang have a general belief in a peculiar kind of love-medicine, which is called *chenwei*. Even married people try to influence one another with this, to hold one another when love begins to wane on one side. It is, however, chiefly used before marriage to kindle love. Sometimes love-medicine is used by a third party to break up a marriage. The flower called *chenwei* (Malay, *pangasch*) is sought. The female blossom grows on the ground, the male hangs from the tree. To be of any use both must be found together. The stalk, which is about fifteen centimetres long, is very thin, the flower white. I never saw the flower among the Semang, but only heard descriptions of it. It is said to be extraordinarily rare. The two blossoms, male and female, are dried, burned to an ash, and mixed with oil. When a man desires the love of a woman, he entrusts to a boy the duty of smearing the love-salve on her breast and forehead while she is asleep. A woman wishing to do this to the man of her

choice entrusts the task to a girl. The action is performed without any words.

After the love-salve has been applied, the situation develops of itself. One party comes involuntarily to the other and they marry. Kêladi from Têladn, from whom I obtained this information, told me that he had approached Bunga in this way. Should it become known that a man has stolen his neighbour's wife in this manner, there is usually a fight.

Whether this *chenwei* love-medicine is an ancient institution among the Semang, or whether the custom has been adopted, I could not ascertain. It is certainly practised among all Semang, and it is equally certain that most Malays believe in it and go to the Orang-Utan for the blossoms.

In the encampment the newly-married pair lead exactly the same life as the others. They have their own shelter and a separate household.

The question of the age at which the Semang are accustomed to marry I cannot answer exactly. The girls, who are in a minority, are much sought after. I knew one who already had a household of her own at the age of thirteen or fourteen. The fifteenth or sixteenth year may be taken as a general marriage age for girls, while the men marry between the ages of eighteen and twenty.

During the many months I spent among the Semang in the most varied encampments, I cannot remember more than one case of impropriety, the incident I have told about Chago being the single exception. I wandered from one Semang camp to another from March to December, inclusive, but never heard any indecent talk, although from my shelter I had an uninterrupted view in all directions into the huts of the dwarfs. Cohabitation, they told me, took place in the hut, but only at night. In the daytime it is regarded as a sin against Karei, and must be expiated with the blood sacrifice. It therefore always occurs in the greatest secrecy.

It must not be inferred from this that the people do not speak of sexual matters.

The Semang understand the connection between sexual intercourse and conception. Tajen expressed this clearly and simply with the words: "*Pai noi, ja we wogn*" (You come together, and the child is there). Stevens speaks of a soul-bird which brings the soul of the child into the mother's body when she eats it. I have never met with this view. He says the bird is called *tiltoltapa*. It is known to the Malays of Bersiak, who call it *teti tinga anak*. If it sings near any hut the woman in that hut will soon conceive a child. But that is a Malay belief. The Jahai call the bird *chebreb*, but do not in any way connect it with conception.

The Kenta, on the other hand, know the *tiltoltapa* bird; but it is a *hala* bird, which forms the fœtus in the mother's body by means of its supernatural power.

As far as I know, the pregnant woman does not spare herself in any way. She goes daily with the other women into the forest in search of food up to the day of the birth. Pregnant women must observe certain prohibitions of diet.

*Saben* (Malay: *sawen*) means epilepsy. There is a current belief that the child will suffer from epilepsy if the mother does not observe these prohibitions with regard to food. *Saben* are: eating squirrel (*krale*, Malay: *topei*), the monitor lizard (*gěregn*, Malay: *biawak*), the mawa monkey and the argus pheasant (*kawogn*, Malay: *kawow*). All animals shot with the gun or bow and all large fish are also *saben*.

Këladi from Těladn also added the *menturun* (wild cat), but old Pa Loa did not agree.

The confinement takes place in the living-hut. A seat is prepared for the woman under the shelter. A few sticks or bamboos are driven into the ground and sloped back to act as a back-rest for the patient. She sits on some bamboos, with her face towards the roof. The men of the camp usually go away, the husband remaining at hand to help if necessary. The woman is assisted by her female relatives and particularly by the midwife, who massages the lower part of her body. Each camp has its midwives. In Ramogn's they

were Serei, Jelei's wife, and Ramogn's wife. On the Těladn they were Lao's wife and another.

The umbilical cord is severed with a bamboo knife, and buried outside the encampment. No other knife may be used for this purpose.

The child is afterwards named by the midwife; if the latter is away from the camp for a time, the child remains without a name until she returns. Each new-born child is named after the tree, plant, flower, stream, or mountain, near which it is born. This explains the frequent Malay names to be found among the negrito, for nowadays many plants are given Malay names.

The mother feeds the child at the breast for more than two years. Should the mother of a new-born child die, the other women who can do so act as nurses, so that sometimes a mother will suckle two children at the same time. Generally, I was told, the Semang women have not an overabundant supply of milk.

Twin births occasionally occur. On the Těladn I knew a grown-up twin pair for a long time before I could distinguish one from the other. I have never heard of more than two children at one birth.

The negrito women have easy deliveries, and they like to have a lot of children. Kěładi of Těladn let fall the remark that the women do not like to have more than three or four children, because it is difficult to find food for them. A young wife usually has a child every three years. They also claim to know means of producing abortion, and herbs acting as contraceptives, as well as aphrodisiacs. Kunyit claimed that they never used such medicines themselves, but were continually asked for them by the Malays. Kěładi also told me that a woman, after the death of her child, did not like to have another too soon for fear it should follow the first and die. This belief may have its root in their view of the soul. In such cases, about three years are allowed to pass before a fresh Orang-Utan comes into the world.

I only remained one night in Ramogn's encampment. I was expecting bearers from the Těladn camp to take my baggage there. As they did not appear, I started off with my Malays. Ramogn came with me for a considerable part of the way until we reached the footpath on the bank. He was really a loyal, honest soul. I expressed my appreciation with a good present.

As we were marching along the bank, we heard loud shouts from the water. It was my frizzy-headed friends from the Těladn. I answered, and the raft came alongside the bank. There they were, the four dark-brown, almost naked figures: Kěladi, Lebai, Chenbis, and Jantogn. At a word from me they vanished into the forest to fetch my baggage by which Habis was squatting. As he ran, Kěladi called out to me that my hut was all ready and waiting for me.

In Kuala Teměngor, on the near side of the river, I halted for the night. Here, too, there was a rest bungalow. After the baggage had arrived we bathed, cooked, and talked. Pa Loa, the old dwarf, whose features showed no trace of Semang or Mongol descent, came out to meet us in the late afternoon. With his blow-pipe over his shoulder, he trotted alone along the path, searching the trees for monkeys and squirrels.

I had made the acquaintance of Pa Loa (Father Loa), the father of Chenbis and uncle on the paternal side of Kěladi, in the Bersiak encampment. Whereas all the inhabitants of the camp were in and out of my hut daily, he never came. He seemed to me to be silent and reserved, so that I even felt uncomfortable in his presence. After I had visited him several times in the encampment, and chatted with him, the ice finally melted and he came to see me. There was always a certain awkwardness about these visits, as though he was ashamed to accept anything from me. He never once asked me for anything, while most of the others repeatedly begged me for presents. There was something refined and aloof in his personality, and sometimes he would keep me waiting a

long time for an answer. Then he would speak slowly and deliberately, with a trace of a smile playing in the corners of his eyes. His bearing was similar ; he walked slowly, with deliberate stride, in fact his every movement was deliberate. He worked slowly, but whatever he undertook was well done. In this way he acted as a brake upon many of the hotheads in the camp. As a rule he would be sitting near when I was putting the most varied questions to the others. Kēladi was the usual spokesman. When he failed, Pa Loa had to intervene. He did so with the smiling expression I have described. Now and again he would contradict the other. All kept silence when Pa Loa was speaking.

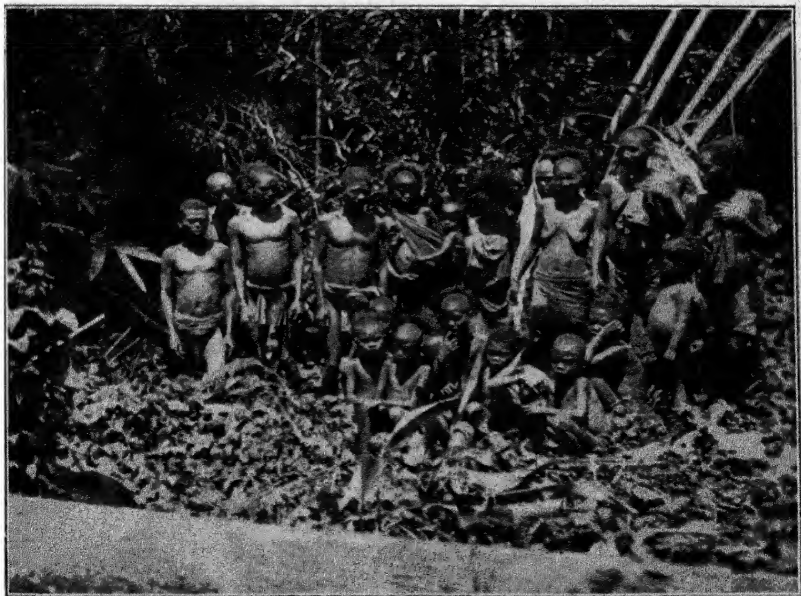
I rarely saw the old man laugh. Perhaps he found life in the forest too hard to be amused. Yet I remember his laughing once until the tears ran down his face. At Bersiak he gave me the explanation of a song about the Kra monkey, which W. Skeat had already recorded among the Jarum Jahai. The song describes the monkey leaping from branch to branch, darting down to the ground and seizing fruit, extraordinarily agile. I reproduce it here as Pa Loa recited and explained it to me :

O chantugn Kra	With his feet stamps the Kra,
O ioi Kra,	Fruits are stolen by the Kra,
O tegn-tagn Kra	Up and down runs the Kra,
Balogn tangoi Kra	On the trunk of the rambutan the Kra.
Perderr Semei Kra	On the semei (bamboo) climbs the Kra.
Perderr hamalegn Kra,	On the hamalegn climbs the Kra,
Haurr Kra	On the haurr (bamboo) climbs the Kra,
O jinjudn Kra,	Long he hangs down, the Kra.
O chantugn Kra,	With his feet stamps the Kra
Tigtugn techawogn Kra,	With him stamp the young of the Kra.
O iob iob Kra,	Greedily gazes down the Kra,
Wogn Wogn tangoi Kra,	At young rambutan, the Kra,
Tekelachoin Kra,	At the fruit of the rambutan, the Kra.
Sagenap mwgnwogn Kra,	Round about him the young of the Kra,
O iob iob Kra,	Greedily stares down the Kra,
Teledhud Kra	Bends the branch for his spring the Kra.
Keladign Kra.	Springs from the sagging branch, the Kra.





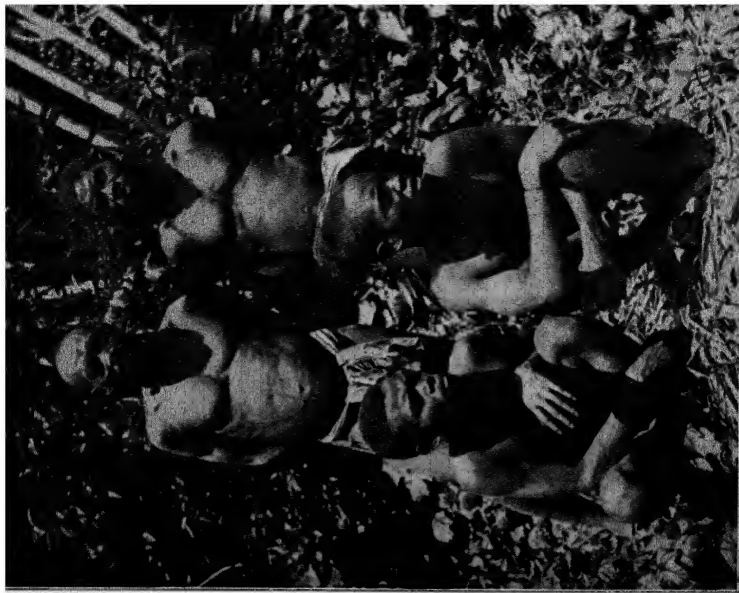
TAOGN'S CHILDREN (p. 126)



INHABITANTS OF THE TAOGN ENCAMPMENT (p. 126)



A KENSIC LADY IN ALL HER FINERY, BAMBOO COMB AND  
GRASS BANDS



TWO ELDERLY GENTLEMEN STOOD BEFORE ME  
(p. 156)

Pa Loa imitated every movement of the Kra monkey, shaking all the time with laughter.

After dinner the Orang-Utan, Malays, the Kling (Tamul), and I, sat together in front of the block-house, and listened to the song of the *barau* bird, as in throbbing notes it took leave of the setting sun. The shadows of the forest hung over the foaming Perak. All around, dark forest, in whose shades tigers and elephants were starting on their nightly prow. We left the field to them and returned to the hut. The Semang sleeps without bed or mattress and thus the five brown figures lay down here. But no one thought of sleep; it was so good to talk by the flickering camp-fire amid the fragrant tobacco smoke.

In the beginning was a man who was called Yegn. Now when the Běrok monkey had started the great fire, Yegn had to flee. He boarded a raft and travelled downstream to the sunset (*segn kěto*). From the Malays of the interior the Jahai know that Nabi, the prophet of the Malays, lives away in the west, whither many of them make pilgrimages. There, on the other side of Nabi's house, is a place whither all Yurl (the souls of the dead) come, whether they were good or evil. With the Yurl there is day and night as with us. But Yegn on his raft went still further beyond, to where the sun set, where there is only day and no more night. There were no tigers, no elephants, no diseases. That is the abiding-place of Yegn. There he lives with his wife and two of his grandchildren. He grows old and grows young again, and never dies. This place is called Chehoi. The Semang call themselves grand-children of Yegn.

Great was the astonishment of my companions when I interrupted the speaker and said that I came from Chehoi; my home lay in the region of the setting sun, beyond Nabi's home and therefore in Chehoi. At once they fell upon me with a hundred questions: had I seen Yegn? were there really no tigers and no diseases? was it really pleasantly cool over there, and not so hot as here?

Without betraying myself or in any way causing them to doubt their belief, I withdrew from the trap with excuses and asked about the Yurl.

Once more the torrent of words began to flow. When a man dies, he is buried, but his Yurl goes to that place by the setting sun where all Yurl foregather. By day they live over there exactly as they do here. A man's wife here becomes the wife of the same man yonder. In the night the Yurl become like birds and flutter round. They like to come near the spot where their body lies buried. For fear of these Yurl the grave is avoided. Fear of that of a bachelor is particularly great. He died without a wife and has no one with whom to live over there. That makes him so ill-tempered that he kills anyone who passes.

The Yurl fly from tree to tree, and come in the night near to the encampment, where they give forth their cry. Their voice pierces deep into the soul, and makes the people squatting round the camp-fire shudder with fear. No Semang would dare to speak a word while the cry of the Yurl is ringing through the air. The camp-fires are immediately put out, for where there is light thither the Yurl flies and tears out the man's tongue so that he must die.

"How does the Yurl cry out," I asked, "so that I, too, may know its voice when it is near me?"

"If in the night you hear a piercing, wailing voice : yuy . . . yuy . . . yuy . . . (Kēladi gave out the sounds in head notes) that is the Yurl."

The Yurl come back to fetch their own people to the beyond ; the man his wife, the brother his sister. But as the Semang, too, sets store by his life, however miserable it may be, he tries to save himself from his pursuer by flight. After a burial the encampment is at once changed, if possible to the other side of a stream. It appears that a Yurl cannot cross water.

Unfortunately, I could not determine what species of animal produces the Yurl cry. In their own language the

Jahai call it *Yog*. It has butterfly-like wings and a short tail, and is said to resemble the animal which the Malays call *Bĕla bĕlum*.

The Jahai regard the sun as feminine, and the moon as masculine. Originally, both had children who were like their parents. The children of the sun were hot, the children of the moon cold. At that time an insufferable heat brooded over the earth, which men could no longer endure. The moon felt sorry for man, and conceived a cunning plan to help him. He hid his children under his arm. In astonishment the sun asked: "Where are your children?" "I have eaten them," the cunning moon replied, "and they tasted very good." Then he invited the sun to do the same. She allowed herself to be persuaded. Immediately the heat upon earth relaxed. Then the moon brought out his children from under his arm, and behold, the army of the stars was once more in the firmament. The sun turned white with envy and hatred, and since that day she chases the moon to avenge herself upon him.

I had already noticed that the men frequently wear round their heads a plaited band, or a single black band bound round the wrist, while the women wear them round their bodies. These are called *tĕmtobn*. They are made of a kind of fungus, which the Malays call *urat batu*. These bands have a magic purpose, protecting the wearer from illnesses which come from rain during sunshine. Rain during sunshine is rather dangerous, and at such times the Semang either does not go out, or wears the *tĕmtobn* as protection.

The following is the connection with sunshine rain. The great earth serpent, which is said to resemble the *ular sawar* (python), often creeps up to heaven to take a bath. When it is in the firmament it shines in many colours. It is then called *hura*, the rainbow snake. Sometimes it scatters the water of its bath, and this causes the dangerous sun rain, which must be avoided.

I brought out my notebook, and began to write by candle-

light. The pen ran quickly over the paper, and outside could be heard now and again the pak . . . pak . . . pak . . . pack . . . pack . . . pack. . . . of two punga bards calling good-night. But my Semang went on whispering and twisting their cigars.

Early morning found us again on the march. The path by the Perak was thickly grown with grass, and drenched with dew. Flying-foxes circled round the crests of the fruit trees, which at this season were covered with food for them. The shot-gun I had bought in Taiping, as a present for Ramogn, here did me good service. Ramogn had said he wanted a breechloader, for which he could get powder from the Malays ; what was he to do with a shot-gun, when he had run through the cartridges ? So I had taken the gun with me and shot these curious animals for our larder. Their bat-like wings bore them smoothly through the air. At times they hung in hundreds in the tree-tops. I was lucky, and several fell to my gun. They did not, however, often fall when shot. As a rule they remained fixed in a death-clutch to the branch. The loads would then be quickly laid down and an Orang-Utan would climb the tree or hack down the bamboo. Often the quarry was not bagged even then, for the wounded animal would bare his claws and his teeth until a blow with the *parang* finally settled him.

The Těladn camp was very extensive. In its centre stood a very large, fine hut, to which Kěladī conducted me, as it was to be mine. In the eighteen months of my life in the forest I was never so comfortably housed as here. A little kitchen was built adjoining my hut, which was on piles, and connected with it by a bamboo foot-bridge.

Never, either, had I been so plagued with smoke as on the Těladn. The Semang shelters were grouped around me, and the smoke from all of them rose merrily to my abode. No matter in what direction the wind might blow, there were camp-fires on every side. I cannot say how many wasted tears fell from my eyes as, sitting on my mattress, I entered up my

notes. Sometimes the dwarfs would take pity on me, of their own accord, and put out their fires. As often as I could, I climbed down from my desirable dwelling and sat down under one of the shelters, defying the protests of the dogs.

I was pleasantly surprised at the size of the encampment, and perhaps even more so to find that Bejuan had elected to absent himself. He, indeed, had every reason for this, for he had been appointed *penglima* by the District Officer, with a view to laying out a plantation. Whilst all the others had already cleared a patch of forest for this purpose, he had so far not wielded a single axe-blow.

On the Tēladn I hoped to discover how much truth there was in the statement of the Sabubn of Bersiak that among them the wives of brothers are held in common, whereas intercourse with strangers is a punishable offence. Old Loa, whom I questioned on this subject, emphatically denied the statement that communism in wives existed among them in any form whatever. "Yes, it is so among the Sabubn and the Ple, but among the Jahai it is unthinkable that a man should have intercourse with his brother's, or any other man's wife. That is *Lawaid Karei* (Sin against Karei). Such a thing used to be punished by beating to death; nowadays, when we follow the white man's law (*hukum*), the evil-doer must pay twenty *ringget* (the Malay dollar, worth two shillings). But among the Sabubn a woman can have several husbands."

I wondered whether Bejuan, the loose-liver, was responsible for introducing this impropriety from his old tribe.

The Tēladn encampment comprised seventeen shelters, with fifty-four inhabitants. It was particularly remarkable for the fact that it contained several family groups, which maintained their individuality by each having a continuous flight of huts. I counted four of these. Two large family shelters were built in gable form, the two roofs facing one another and touching. The framework of these shelters was made from massive bamboos.

The camp contained a great number of children who kept

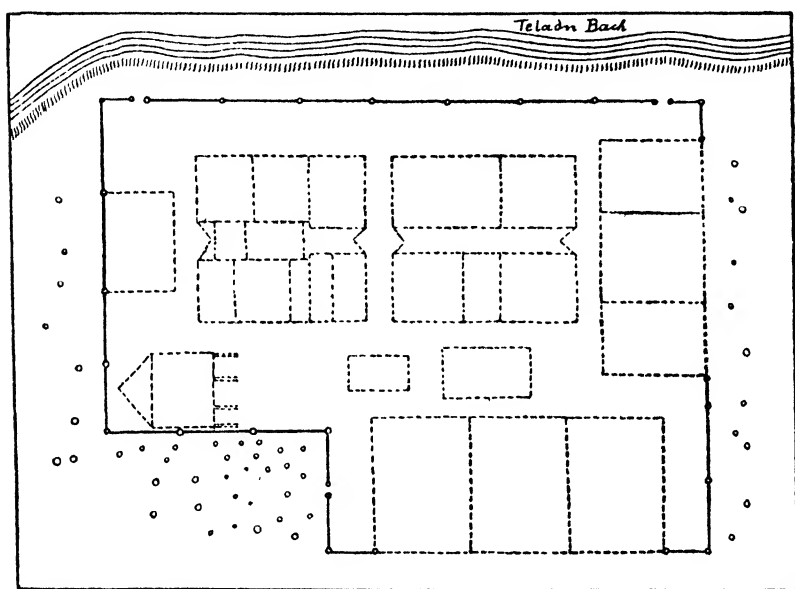
it pretty lively, although, compared with European children, they might pass as models of quiet behaviour. I here made the acquaintance for the first time of orphans who had lost either one or both parents. Then there was Tapogn, who had already married and separated three times and was now a confirmed bachelor. To my question whether he did not intend to marry, he replied that he did not intend to have anything further to do with women. This young man had two little brothers living with him, twins of about six. The little fellows would sit where they were and gaze round the camp, watching the other children eating heartily as soon as their mothers had come back from the forest and cooked a meal. They did not go hungry, though it was a long time before one or other of the women took pity on them and called them up to give them some, their own children having the first claim. The two boys only seemed to have one woman relative, and she had three children of her own to bring up unaided.

I repeatedly heard hungry children crying, but they were at once satisfied by their mothers. I never saw a tear in the eyes of these two little boys and this surprised me. "What should they cry for; they have no mother to hear them?" a woman answered. She did not say this in any spirit of unkindness; she was merely stating a fact. All the same, I am bound to say that orphan children are neglected among the Semang. Their own children come first, even when the orphan is a brother's child who has been adopted. There was a little orphan girl in Lemogn's hut, a little older than their own child, who was spoiled by both father and mother. They were less generous with the orphan's food and her clothes were scantier. The mother would often give her own child some tit-bit, but never the orphan, who also called her mother. The orphan once lay for two days with fever on her hard bamboo bed in the corner without moving, and little notice was taken of her. On the third day, when the child was feeling a little better, it was made to get up and fetch water from a



neighbouring stream. Even among the Orang-Utan, step-mothers are much the same as elsewhere.

Fathers and mothers are very devoted to their children. They are afraid that strangers may entice them away. If one comes suddenly upon a camp one may be sure that the mothers will vanish with the children into the forest, and only be induced to appear after a lot of persuasion.



SKETCH OF THE TĒLADN ENCAMPMENT

I had often seen, with astonishment and pleasure, how tenderly the dwarf mothers kiss their children, dangle them on their knees, and prattle to them, laughing.

The negritos are very fond of ornaments; but the mother decks her children first, before thinking of herself. The little one's head is shaved smooth, a clump of hair being left, in front of the head in the case of boys, and behind in that of girls. If the mother is able to obtain beads, she is sure to hang them first round the neck of the youngest, and with glass beads the latest arrival always has the first claim.

It must not be thought that the father is indifferent to his

children. In the absence of the mother he looks after the child, and one often saw fathers caressing their children. Semang children are never beaten, or at any rate I never saw it. The parents cannot bring themselves to raise a hand against the little ones, although sometimes it would have been well deserved. The mother tries to bring the naughty child into the right path by loud scolding, the father by shouting. Apart from members of the family, however, no one ventures to scold the children.

I had many opportunities of observing how proud the mothers are of their children. If a baby clutched my proffered finger and smiled when I shook its hand, the mother would sometimes invite the bystanders to admire her darling. My right-hand neighbour was Kunyit, who suffered from *puruh*. He was very proud of his wife and his three boys, who were very delightful, especially Běrtam, the youngest. Běrtam had a fear of me which he could not get over, and would only trust himself to look at me from a distance, sticking his finger into his mouth. He was a big boy, more than two years old, but still fed at his mother's breast. One morning she had gone into the forest to dig roots and left her children in the father's charge. All went well while the child was not hungry, but then Běrtam began to howl in stentorian tones. The father gave him a root which he had quickly toasted at the fire. But that was not what Běrtam was crying for. He refused it unceremoniously and went on howling, until he heard my voice. That did the trick, and so effectively, that afterwards the parents used to quieten their children by threatening them with me. The shout : "The *Gob* is coming !" was their way of producing instant quiet among the children. When Běrtam's mother came home in the afternoon, he ran to meet her, and was hanging at her breast before she could put down her load. When he was satisfied, he stuck his finger into his mouth and gazed round the hut. Papa Kunyit was lying stretched on his bamboo bed, smoking. As soon as Běrtam caught sight of the cigar he began his howling over



THE DAMAGE WAS SERIOUS (p. 84)



THEY DEPARTED ON THE FRAIL RAFT (p. 130)



MY SHELTER WAS SOON READY (p. 138)



SHELTER OVER ANGELA'S GRAVE (p. 144)

again. He wanted the cigar, and when it was refused, the little fellow jumped on his father's stomach and began to stamp and shriek. All Kunyit's scolding was useless ; he had to give way. But he compromised. He took from his bast pouch a cigar leaf, lit it, and handed it to the child. Immediately there was peace. Bértam was standing up again, gazing at me with the glowing cigar in his mouth.

When a mother is taking her child out with her, she carries it on her back. She sets the child on its feet, takes it by both hands, and, stooping, swings it sideways on to her back. The child automatically straddles its legs round the mother's body, who then wraps a cloth round the child, draws it over one shoulder and under the other arm-pit, and knots it in front of her breast.

No fifth commandment requiring children to love and honour their parents is known among the Semang ; but it is not necessary, for such feeling is universal with them. Old people always enjoy great respect, which is expressed by their never being contradicted. But there is, of course, no outward show of politeness. When Pa Loa's youngest son, Krachap Krachap, teased his old mother by telling me not to give her any sugar because she was *jenhurl* (toothless), so I had better give it to him, this was only intended as a joke, and both his father and mother laughed.

Nevertheless there is a rule that father and mother must not be addressed in the second person singular (*pai*). The father is always *ai*, and the mother *bo* ; to neglect this custom is to break the commandment of the thunder-god.

The forest dwarfs have different names for the various degrees of age, which makes it difficult for a foreigner to grasp degrees of relationship. The inhabitants of the camp never call each other by name, but use the words denoting relationship to address people, for everyone is in some degree related to all the others. Alternatively the words denoting various degrees of seniority are used.

*Aneg* is used to denote a child at the breast ; *kedn* is a child

which can run about; *wogn* is a general word for child, denoting no special stage. *Kejuch* means young man, and *bale* are the newly-married who have as yet no children, *marwogn* the married with up to three children, whilst those with more than three children are called *bakes*. *Chela* is used for those whose child or children are dead. *Kebet* means old man, and *balu* widow. These names were constantly flying about the camp, but I never heard "Kĕladi," "Pa Loa," or "Kunyit."

The words denoting relationship are as follows: *dodn*, great-grandparent; *ta*, grandfather; *ia*, grandmother; *ai*, father; *bo*, mother; *mir-ber*, brothers and sisters; *pan*, older brothers or sisters; *ber*, younger brothers or sisters; *kanchō*, grandchild; *ai-toi*, uncle, elder brother of the father or mother; *ai-ba*, uncle, younger brother of the father or mother; *bo-toi*, aunt, elder sister of the father or mother; *mo*, aunt, younger sister of the father or mother; *ken'ad'*, parents-in-law; *mensau*, children-in-law; *lamin*, brother-in-law.

The Semang do not intermarry indiscriminately. Marriage is governed by various laws. To begin with, it is unthinkable for a Semang to marry relatives (*mir-ber*) of the first and second degree. Brother and sister, or cousins, can never contract a marriage. A third law relates to the *mir-ber-sapupu*, where they live in the same encampment. If they live far apart they are allowed to marry.

The dwarfs had cleared a large stretch of forest on both sides of the Tĕladn river, and men and women were continually going out to the new plantation to clear and sow. Kĕladi had begged a fishing-net from the Malays. Armed with fish-spears, we set out up the river to fish. We went through the plantation, at the extreme end of which Chenbis was felling a tree and his young wife weeding the ground. We climbed down into the cool stream of the Tĕladn and were again enveloped in thick forest. A huge frog hopped into the undergrowth, a dog after him. Quickly he was snapped up, but

Pa Loa was already there to snatch the quarry from the hungry animal. With a heavy blow he dashed the frog against the rock, and it hung quivering with outstretched legs. It was tied up with a rattan thong and hoisted over the man's back. Now and again the net was cast in deep water. The haul was not bad, but, unfortunately, the fish were small. Krachap Krachap was jumping about from rock to rock in the water, wielding the long fish-spear. A fish swam right below him. He stabbed, and the fish was impaled quivering on the spear. This method of fishing takes up a lot of time, but among the Semang time is of no importance. Any of them is content to have speared one fish in a morning ; that suffices for the day.

On the way home we were lying down in the forest when we heard voices. At some distance, in the forest twilight, we discovered women digging forest roots with pointed sticks. For this purpose a stick is cut and the end sharpened with the *parang*. Armed with this, the women make their way through the jungle. They recognize the tuber, which grows in clayey ground, very deep, by its leaves. Often the poor creatures have to dig a yard down, or even more. They throw the clay out with their hands until at last they get hold of the root, and their dour features brighten as the tubers vanish into the rucksacks. Meanwhile the little girls play about round their mothers, looking for edible fruits, such as the sour berries of the *tao* plant, or scrambling for the red *kmopal* to stain their noses with its juice. We watched for a time and then hurried home. The women, too, seemed to have had enough of their work ; it was afternoon, and the little ones at home would be waiting for them and the frugal supplies they were bringing. So they tripped home, plucking here and there a few edible leaves or the *taa* (pith) of certain plants. In the camp the fire is soon blazing and the roots are set to roast by its glow. Big and small alike can hardly wait for the moment when the tubers are cooked and distributed. Then everyone is happily feeding. Meanwhile the mother prepares a second dish of

leaves and pith. Boiled with water in bamboo, and then sprinkled with a little salt, which I had brought them, and some Spanish pepper ground in the mortar, the dish tastes excellent when one is hungry. This was the beginning of the Orang-Utan's worst season, for the forest fruits were not very plentiful that year and the Malay rice crop was over, so it was no light task to feed a family.

Some boys came into the camp. They too had been fishing in the Perak. They had no fish, but brought in a lot of large *hoid* fruits which grew on the trees by the river bank. They consist of thick husks containing several nuts. These outer shells are cut open, the nuts extracted, and their shells knocked open with a stone. The flavour is like that of a walnut, and they have a strongly purgative effect; yet the fruit is much sought after at this season. The nuts are roasted, or else ground, kneaded in water, and then boiled or steamed in bamboo. Eating them whets the appetite, but unhappily they always produce violent pains in the stomach. Habis, who ate them in large quantities, suffered more and more, but would not learn better. "No, no, it isn't the *hoid*," he persisted, when the Semang laughed at him, and went on greedily stuffing nut after nut between his white teeth.

The preparation of food was not always as simple as this, for not all species of *hubi* can be eaten straight away. Many of the tubers are poisonous, and the poison must first be removed. The forest dwarf knows the forest plants intimately, and is clever enough to make everything serve that is in any way possible. The *tulegn* tuber (*hubi kapor*) is poisonous. To make it edible they burn the leaves of the *gobn* tree and mix the ashes with the *tulegn*, which is first pounded to a pulp. This dish is edible and tastes like paste.

The *gadogn* root (*hubi gadong*) is poisonous. It is brown, and is left to soak a long time in the river before being boiled. The *hakai* tuber (*lekeh*) is also crushed, its flesh dried and then boiled. Each root demands different treatment, just as each has its own flavour. In the Těladn camp I counted twelve



different edible forest roots, and a number of plants of which the pith was eaten.

I cannot commend the Orang-Utans for great cleanliness in eating. Of course, they eat with their fingers. When the dish is a tuber or something equally firm they take hold of it with their hands. In the case of rice or a vegetable, they eat it with the three fingers of the right hand, holding the dish under their chin. When eating rice they lay a banana leaf before them to act as a plate, or else take it up in their hands. I very seldom saw a Semang wash his hands before eating. This is more frequent after meals, although their soiled hands are more likely to be wiped on some tree-trunk or leaf and left at that. When, however, cocoanut dishes are used for serving more liquid vegetable foods, they are carefully cleaned after every meal.

Boiled rice is either served on green bamboo leaves, which are thrown away after each meal, or another kind of dried leaf is used, which is then carefully folded and stored in the roof of the shelter. Often some of the food left over is wrapped in the leaf for later consumption in case of hunger.

After spending a fortnight in the camp on the Těladn, I decided to move on. As my supplies were at an end, I anxiously awaited the return of the men I had sent out to buy rice in Bersiak or Grik. I was forced to depend for food on the forest roots supplied by the inhabitants of the camp, who took pity on me. One evening Lemogn's wife brought out from under a shelter a bamboo in which a little rice had been saved. This she offered me, smiling, and without a word. The two little children at her side looked at me wide-eyed, for they were hungrier than I was. How could I have taken the handful of rice from them? Naturally I declined with thanks. The same evening the bearers appeared with their load of rice. I hoped with these supplies to reach Bělum, where I could replenish my stores from the Malays. I always had to be careful with supplies, not because rice was dear, but because in the interior it was unobtainable. Sometimes

I hoped to replenish my stock in some Malay kampong, and more than once found that it was impossible. Often the Malays themselves had none and it became doubtful more than once whether I should be able to go on. We repeatedly found ourselves compelled to cultivate a taste for roots.

I had hired four bearers on the Těladn to accompany me to the next Semang encampment on the Taogn river. There I had other bearers in view for the next three days' journey to Bělum.

In the early morning the little caravan strode out from the camp through the wet undergrowth, and soon actually through the splashing waters of the Těladn, to reach the path on the bank of the Perak. In the afternoon we reached Bandegn.

Bandegn is a wild spot, feared and avoided by both Malays and Orang-Utan. It lies on the direct route, and cannot be avoided, for there is no other way leading to the interior. Isolated, tall cocoanut palms, many *durian* trees, and a stunted lemon tree showed evidence of better days. Formerly the place had been inhabited by Malays, a fact further supported by the sight of a decrepit farm. Many of the Malays, who had come from the east, succumbed to the treacherous climate, and the survivors saved themselves by flight to Bersiak. Since this time Bandegn has been a waste, covered with scrub and dry grass. All around looms the dark forest, where the *siamang* ape screams in competition with the *barau* nightingale, a haunt of elephants, tigers, and *sěladang* buffaloes.

Even Bandegn has its rest bungalow, a corrugated iron hut, intended to afford travellers in the wilds shelter for the night and to protect them against rain and wild beasts.

My disappointment was great when I saw the hut emerging from the elephant grass; elephants and storms had reduced it to a shattered ruin.

The corrugated iron roof stood on bare poles. We climbed up a plank like hens going to roost. The *durian* fruit made my bearers' mouths water. True, they were not ripe, but that

does not prevent the Semang from indulging in them. None, however, dared climb the ownerless trees. After all, they had been planted by the Malays and belonged to them. After repeated encouragement from me, Chenbis did finally make up his mind to climb them, and brought down a quantity of fruit.

While the Orang-Utan were feasting on *durian*, I drank the milk of a cocoanut which my servant Habis had brought down from a lofty palm. The Tamul is far superior to the Orang-Utan when it comes to climbing. Whereas the latter becomes nervous at a dizzy height, the Tamul is not affected.

Night had fallen. After a short chat at the fire, my bearers had gone to rest. I, too, wrapped myself in my blanket and was soon asleep. The chill of the night, however, soon aroused me. I lit a candle and looked at my watch. It was eleven o'clock. In the pitch-black night around me all was silent save for the intermittent cry of a small owl. The cold in the open was bitter. I passed a glance of enquiry over the brown figures which, clad only in their loin-cloths, lay huddled together for warmth. The fire, which they call their clothing because it warms them, was already out.

I awoke them for fear they should catch cold. The fire was re-lit, and soon bright flames were crackling in the air. While the others huddled close together in a corner for fear of wild animals, my good Kēladi remained squatting by the blazing fire, held his hands over the flame, and sang as loud and well as he could. I gladly let him go on, and myself joined in the refrain until my eyes closed. Kēladi sang right through the night, warming himself by the fire. The theme of his song was fear; not of wild animals, but of the *hantu* (spirits) of the Malays. The burial-ground was quite near.

That evening he had told me how once before he had been frightened by ghosts in this tumble-down hut. He had heard strange noises such as he had never heard in his life before. He made an effort to reproduce them. The men agreed unanimously that they would not have dared spend the night

in this place if I had not been there; they would have preferred to go to the island in the Perak.

Belief in the *hantu* is not native to the Semang. They have adopted it from the Malays, their superiors culturally, who are extraordinarily superstitious.

My attention was drawn to some boards that had been laid across the rafters under the roof. A few days before, some Malays, overtaken in this place by night, had waited there in terror for the daylight. They had climbed up into the rafters from fear of the *hantu*. Fear of the *hantu* has turned Bandegn into a place of desolation. But I shall always remember that night when my good Kēladi sang by the fire until the dawn.

In the morning I wound my puttees very tight round my legs and closed the lace-holes of my shoes with soap. The bearers made themselves little bamboo containers filled with soap-suds and a little stick, as weapons against the most dangerous enemy of the traveller in Malay, the leech. The leech is worse than elephant, tiger, and *sēladang* buffalo all put together. The *sēladang* buffalo is seldom seen by day, though its tracks are deeply imprinted where the ground is soft. But the paths swarm with leeches. These are not the water-leech, but the land-leech, which clings to the ground or the scrub. Everywhere they creep along the paths, sometimes in threes, sometimes more. Hardly as thick or as long as a match, they glide noiselessly up. The traveller may be a couple of paces away when something darts up in front of him, stands up with the upper end waving in all directions, or erect like a match stuck in the ground. Then it begins to move again, makes straight for the traveller, glides, or rather propels itself along, incredibly lithe and swift, until it reaches the weary foot. Unnoticed, it climbs up until it has found a spot where it can fix itself and suck itself fast. The traveller goes calmly on until he feels a prick as though from a needle. He knows from experience that it is a leech. Automatically he halts, gropes with his fingers, and tears the little monster away. This would be all right if there were only one! But

there are always several others, which have wormed their way up like the first, but have not had time to fix themselves. On a bad path, one has to stop every five minutes to clear one's legs of the loathsome things. If there is the solution of soap mixed with tobacco at hand, one sprinkles the insects with it and they drop off. Otherwise each insect has to be pulled off separately.

What is to be done when the things get into boots or shoes? You feel the sting, then the itching, then the blood soaking into the stocking. Are you to stop, take off shoes and stockings and get rid of the pests? You grudge the loss of time and trudge gloomily on. At last the irritation becomes intolerable, and you stop and unlace your shoe. Stocking and foot are red with blood which is still dripping from the wound. The leech, normally brownish, is glutted with blood to a tight black bag, and has already fallen off. It does not move. But where do these other, tiny leeches come from, scarcely the size of a needle-point, and clustering in large numbers round the wound? Heaven only knows; they have been left behind by the first. After the bleeding has been stopped with lint, the exasperating itch remains for several days. It is very bad when abscesses form on the sensitive wound. The leech must be furnished with a wonderful sense of smell, for it detects the presence of the traveller from a distance of several yards. Whether one turns to right or left, the animal follows ruthlessly.

There are two kinds of these leeches. One kind creep along the ground, the others hang from the branches of the bush bordering the path. The latter are of a greyish colour, and are greatly feared, as they are said to cause disease. They usually fix themselves to the upper part of the body, where they would be least expected.

Damp, dimly-lit paths are the hunting-grounds of these obscene pests. I had already tried all kinds of protective measures, but to no purpose. Though I smeared my shoes, leggings, and trousers thick with soap—the leech has a real

respect for soap—this was not effective for long. Ten minutes later one would be wading through a stream or walking through dew-drenched grass and the soap would be washed away. One could hardly soap oneself afresh every half-hour, and who could carry half a kilo of soap about with him?

The Semang seizes the leech in his fingers and wipes it off on the nearest leaf. As the creature is very soft and slimy it cannot be crushed. They either throw it into the fire or cut it up with the *parang*; then they are sure it is dead. But on the march there is no time for this.

The fact that we had not been disturbed by the *hantu* during the night was put down by the Semang solely to my presence. Scarcely had we left the hut, than we were again swallowed up in the elephant grass, drenched with dew and as tall as a man. The path grew continually more unpleasant. Rotten tree-trunks, which had dragged down all the undergrowth in their fall, repeatedly blocked the way, so that a path had to be cut with a bush-knife through which we forced our way on all fours. The Jahai, carrying a load on his back, worms his way lithely and gracefully through, but the novice gets caught first on one side and then the other by the thorny scrub; his topee is torn off, his face scratched.

It has often been maintained that the modest clothing of the forest people is merely to protect the sexual organs against thorns or leeches. From my experience of many months among the natives of Malaya I must emphatically declare this to be false. The loin-cloth, or indeed any clothing at all, assists the activities of the leeches. On each day's journey the chief torment suffered by the Semang was caused by the leeches creeping under their loin-cloths. If the Semang had not possessed a sense of modesty, he would certainly when travelling through the forest have cast off every rag of clothing, to go unhampered. A piece of cloth or bast drawn between the legs can be comfortably worn, as it does not catch in the thorns, but it is different when the cloth flaps about, as it does in the case of the women, who wear it hung round the

loins. I often noticed that it was in their way, and that for comfort they would draw it between the legs exactly like the men. The Malays who live in the bush, moreover, do exactly the same. On the bush paths the natives on principle wear as little clothing as possible. Modesty, therefore, is the sole reason why the Semang do not discard their loin-cloths on the jungle paths.

This view is confirmed by the fact that the children, if they have to walk through the thorny undergrowth of the forest, do not wear any loin cloth ; up to a certain age they do not wear any clothes at all.

One of the finest jungle journeys is that through the splendid bamboo forest we now traversed for a few miles. Like thousands of arrows, the bare bamboo stalks towered aloft, arching themselves at a great height into a green vault, so thick that the sky was shut out. No vegetation could grow in its shade. The foot strode unhindered over ground soft as velvet. I felt as though I was in a fairy wood, breathed more freely, and felt refreshed. But the enjoyment was short-lived. Once more we turned, ran down a slope, and suddenly were standing in the water of a river.

Just as we were, we waded to the opposite bank, often up to the hips in water. In the crests of the trees the monkeys screamed and laughed and, swinging from branch to branch, made off into the distance.

The water squelched in my canvas shoes as we clambered laboriously up the further bank. The way led over smooth rocks, where each step had to be watched to avoid slipping down the bank and taking an involuntary bath in the foaming Perak. Wearily I gasped my way forward with dragging steps and struggled over the holes which the elephants had trampled in the soft swampy ground, and which were now filled with brackish water. For hours we marched forward in this way, the sweat running from every pore, while I kept impatiently looking at my watch. I felt hungry and a light fever throbbed through my veins. The goal was not yet in sight !

The Semang trotted cheerfully behind with their loads, letting their eyes wander to right and left to take note of the trees or look for fruit, scaring away the flying-foxes which hung limply in the crests. Their sharp eyes missed nothing; even a solitary monkey peeping out in terror at the caravan from behind a branch, was spied and "shooed" away with shouts. At last we saw *lalang* grass; the forest receded, and we entered a clearing. Behind high bamboos the rest bungalow lay hidden. Thank God, we had arrived; our journey was at an end for the day. We were in Kriogn.

Kriogn is a wilderness; no human being to be seen far and wide. The rest bungalow was in tolerably good repair and I was already looking forward to my night's rest. Scarcely had we arrived than we threw off our clothes and plunged into a refreshing bath.

In the night my Kling told the breathless Semang interminable Indian fairy-tales. The following morning Chenbis surprised me with the announcement that on this bank Tapogn was eight "stones" away, though further by the other.

Naturally we took the shorter way and reached the bank of the rushing river, which had to be crossed. My Semang did not hesitate long, and while my Malay and Kling were still taking off their clothes they were already fording the stream, the heavy loads on their shoulders, and a stout stick in their right hand. Chenbis and Kēladi successfully reached the bank and hurried back to help us. I was standing in the middle of the stream, which was threatening to sweep me away. Kēladi seized my hand and held me. The stream was beating about my chest. But we managed it, and reached the bank. How cold it was in my wet clothes! Fortunately I had brought a dry spare shirt from my luggage and could at least change into this. Thick clouds of mist hung round the river bank, and the moisture was dripping from the trees.

The scene sent shivers down the back! Ferns, pandanus bushes, thickets of rattan; and, rising in their midst, the



tremendous, towering forest giants. All around, the silence of the grave. Not a twig, not a leaf stirred ; nothing but the echo of my steps broke the stillness of this wild region. Splashing and squelching, we waded through the unending coils of the Kriogn bed, now in slime and swamp, now in clear water, and then again over quartz boulders. The misty twilight of the scene affected my nerves. I cautiously searched with my eyes the undergrowth and foliage. I kept thinking some monster, a tiger or *sĕladang* buffalo, must be about to hurl itself upon us. Judging from the countless tracks we crossed, this stretch must have been full of such beasts. Wearily we continued our march upstream. How I regretted now having taken the shorter way. Swarms of leeches attacked us and tortured us mercilessly.

We reached the source of the Kriogn. We turned towards the valley, and waded down through the Oro stream. The discovery of fresh elephant trails struck new terror into my Semang. A solitary elephant must have passed this way a few moments before, making for the same goal as ourselves. Should we run into it ? Great consternation reigned, and then all four Orang-Utan, like one man, burst into an ear-splitting, reiterated howl. They intended to scare the elephant away, and they succeeded. We could see from the trail where the monster in its headlong flight had repeatedly slipped on the steep path and, just short of our destination, had wheeled off in another direction. We were approaching Tapogn. We entered a large clearing with a small Malay kampong. Hedged in by banana bushes, two huts drowsed in the searing sunlight. Below roared the Perak, to which we hurried down. We boarded a raft and propelled ourselves to the further bank. Another short stretch, and we had reached the rest hut in the midst of high *lalang* grass. These rest bungalows had been erected along the Perak years before by Berkeley, and afforded many conveniences to the traveller. Unfortunately, they were continually falling into ruin, as no one except the few Malays from Bĕlum used this path.

Scarcely had I settled in the hut, than the Malays from the other side came over with a few trifling presents. Chewing betel, they sat in front of me and spat the yellow juice through the apertures in the floor. From them I received the disappointing news that there were no Semang in Bělum. They said they had moved on, no one knew whither. This news was confirmed by Kěladī, who in the meantime had hurried on to the Semang encampment on the Taogn river, about two miles further up. So it was useless to think of continuing the journey, for no one knew where this Orang-Utan group had settled. I therefore decided on a change of direction back to the west, to the Sungei Piah and Plus.

I wanted to devote the following day to the camp on the Taogn. The people already knew about me. My reputation as a healer, as "*balate bow*" (great medicine-man), had preceded me. It proved extraordinarily advantageous that I had Semang with me as bearers. They introduced me, as it were, to their countrymen, giving them details about me, and I am sure that the Jahai from the Těladn presented me everywhere as a charming *tuan*. It was the same here. Two elderly gentlemen appeared before me; not to welcome me, for this the Semang never do. They merely came to keep Kěladī company. In recognition of their politeness they each received a handful of tobacco, with which they were overjoyed. My visit to their camp was announced for the following day and favourably received.

We were all tired out. Kěladī was already asleep in the late afternoon, but he was not allowed much rest. I had so much to ask, and I also wanted to hear some songs. It always took some time to induce dwarfs to sing. Once they got going, however, they would go on a long time. The chief singer here was again the stubborn misogynist, Tapogn.

One of his songs, which moved us all, even my Kling, to laughter, I will reproduce here. It was sung in antiphony. Tapogn sang the verse, while the three others in endless but not wearisome monotony gave the refrain. It was about

the *lutong* ape, which tumbles about and plays with its family in the forest, but is finally slain by the poisoned dart of the hunter.

## PINGLOIN BAWAID

O tign tagn, o chenloi,  
 O tign todn, ioh anagn,  
 O bilai, o komlobn,  
 Lei kemo manow  
 Teberilai ka bo anag,  
 Tecerawogn ka ai anag.  
 O tign todn ; cha tign legn ;  
 Illel kemo bategn  
 Kemo bategn teboruliun.  
 Eg de ai, pai !  
 We ! Kign jegn lagu mawa,  
 Lei angin berual, Tecerawogn . . .  
 We ! Kign jegn, cha tign legn . . .  
 O keblebn belau suor,  
 Oi suor, teperisoi,  
 Lei rabo, lei gase,  
 Tecenarin suket bertam.  
 Oi bö anag !

## SONG OF THE LUTONG APE

It wanders to and fro (the little ape).  
 and springs from branch to branch,  
 It wanders to and fro  
 On the branch of the anag tree,  
 It spies manow fruit,  
 Sticks it into its cheek pouch.  
 Father and mother gaze around,  
 They all watch the young ones.  
 It walks up and down,  
 it looks into the distance ;  
 It spies bategn fruit,  
 Yes, bategn fruit,  
 It rubs it up and down.  
 Here you, give it to your father !  
 Hush ! We hear the mawa ape,  
 Theyoungones hear thewind, Berual . . .  
 Hush ! They listen . . .  
 They strain their eyes into the distance.  
 Over his shoulder the hunter  
 lays his blow-pipe,  
 Made from sour bamboo.  
 In it he places  
 rabo wool, the gase dart,  
 It whirrs straight at the quarry,  
 The bertam dart  
 An inch long.  
 O mother !

*The refrain of each verse runs :*

Oi bö tagla !

O the mother looks  
 happily at her child.

The substance of this song is briefly as follows : A young ape, the joy of its father and mother, starts on its first wanderings, climbs up and down the branches, plucks fruit, and generally has great fun. The mother watches her youngest child with delight, as also the father and the other

monkeys, but they keep a look out, listen and watch ; they hear the *mawa* monkeys squalling, they listen to the wind. In the meantime the hunter with his blow-pipe slinks up and shoots the dart into the mother's breast as she is fondly watching her child. What cruelty !

One song followed another, amid laughter, jesting, and wrangling. In the meantime night had fallen. We had not far to go to reach our sleeping huts. We lay down, but our hard-earned rest did not come to us, for we had rarely been so mercilessly attacked by mosquitoes as here. The *lalang* grass seemed to harbour them in myriads. We found ourselves forced to light a fire under the hut as some protection against these pests. The morning therefore was acclaimed with joy. I hurried off, accompanied by two bearers, bringing some presents to the encampment. It lay about eighty kilometres from Grik, not far from the Perak river. I counted nine huts and thirty-two inhabitants. The shelters were built so close together as to form continuous family shelters. There were only three exits. I was able to measure various adults, take several photographs, and purchase a number of specimens. I prescribed medicine for a sick man, who was obviously suffering from malaria.

The following day, while my men were building the raft, I had an opportunity for further observations.

The finest bamboo reeds, from ten to fifteen metres long, were cut with the *parang* and dragged down the sloping bank into the river. Soon twenty-five of these straight reeds were floating in a peaceful backwater. The raft-builders stood up to their chests in the water and made holes in the lower, thicker end of each bamboo in order to fix them in a row on a firm cross-piece, to which they were bound with rattan. At intervals of two or three metres, other cross-pieces were laid over the bamboo floor, each individual cane being made fast to these with rattan and lianas. Then the raft was ready, stout enough for a long journey. Chenbis, the finest raft builder and navigator of all the Semang, tested everything,



THE SEMANG CLIMB WELL (p. 151)



FAMILY FROM THE BELUN CAMP (p. 154)



THE CHIEF CURIOSITY OF THE CAMP; THE WOMAN WHO  
ROSE FROM THE DEAD (p. 153)



TWO UNUSUAL TYPES WITH SHARPLY RECEDING  
FOREHEADS (p. 153)

and arranged the bamboo canes which were to be used to build a superstructure in the middle of the raft, upon which my luggage was placed and where I could myself find a seat. A low leaf roof resting on four supports provided shelter from rain and sun. Two enormous rudders were fixed with special care on forked supports, fore and aft.

In spite of the fact that a thunderstorm was threatening, I hurried on our departure. Before evening we reached Kriogn without incident. My Semang bearers told me that this stretch was navigated by a troop of extraordinarily shy Semang with small rafts. These people avoid even the Malays, and are said to associate extremely rarely with the Těladn people. Naturally I was most anxious to become acquainted with them. No one knew where the Banugn people were settled. Our vessel glided smoothly down the river, now drifting slowly, now shooting with the swiftness of an arrow over the rapids.

As we approached the juncture of the Gadogn and Perak, voices reached us from the thickly overgrown confluence. It was the wild men of Banugn. Swiftly Chenbis pushed me under the shelter so that none of them should catch sight of a white man. But they had already seen us. A crashing of twigs in the undergrowth, as though a herd of wild animals were breaking its way through, betrayed to us their hurried flight. The people had vanished in the jungle. With long bounds three of my men dashed after them, shouting all the time: "*Oi, aket loi!*" (Hi, don't run away!) In vain! They had left behind them their rods, and also a bast bag with some prickly *durian* fruits. Even a fishing-spear was left lying on the raft, so hurried was the flight of the Orang-Utan we had surprised.

The *durian*, so often mentioned, is a fruit universally coveted by animals, Orang-Utan, and Malays. Even white men set great store upon it once they have grown accustomed to it. Its taste is like that of a cream, but it has a very pungent smell. Once one has overcome one's first antipathy, even a

European is sure to acquire a great taste for *durian*. The Semang prize the *durian* above everything else ; they often wander for days to gather a few of these fruits.

The Banugn people had been surprised in the act of loading their spoils on to the rafts and moving away when they caught sight of us and made off.

About an hour later, Kēladi brought up the tribe, whom he had himself tracked down and persuaded to come back. They could not get away as fast as my men followed them, for they had women with them. Now the dwarfs squatted before me on the bank, trembling with fear, their eyes fixed anxiously upon me. To each of them I gave a handful of tobacco and some matches. Then the chatter began, at first rather diffidently, but growing ever more lively. Only the women met every question with silence.

I distributed further presents of beads and cloth, after which I was able to measure and photograph them all. Then they went away, after I had bought from them some *bapoi* which they had stored on an island on the Perak with a view to building a weather shelter. I wanted it to roof the cabin of my raft, which was only lightly covered with leaves of the wild banana. My Semang begged some *durian* from them.

We got the raft afloat, for in Malay one travels, when possible, only in the morning ; in the afternoon thunderstorms are almost always the rule. We were, however, already several hours late.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the sky turned an ashy grey. Lightning flashed, and the forest on both sides rang with ear-splitting peals of thunder. My Semang squatted motionless and fearful on the raft, lightly handling the rudder.

Driving rain swept down over their bronzed bodies. It grew very cold ; I was shivering under the protecting roof, and the naked Orang-Utan trembling in every limb in the bitter cold. Two of them crept to my side in the hut, but two had to see to the steering. Holding a glowing bough in front



of their chests, they tried to defy the cold, their teeth chattering. The rain never slackened. In Maio, Malay huts tempted us. I was forced to call a halt. The men were too exhausted and chilled to endure the further journey to the Těladn.

In the streaming rain we hurried ashore to take shelter in the rest bungalow, but found it occupied by a Malay family. "This isn't a rest bungalow!" cried a woman's voice from inside the hut. What did the woman mean? But I stood before the door, shivering in my drenched clothes. I was sent to an empty hut, to which I at once hurried, and climbed the rickety bamboo ladder. With a crash the rotten bamboo floor gave way beneath me. I got up again, and tried another step—a further crash, and I was sitting under the hut. How I cursed the wretched Malays! The Semang were sitting under a Malay hut warming themselves at the fire and eating roasted *hubi*. Angrily I shouted to them to come on. What was I to stay here for? Reluctantly the Semang came out, cast off the raft, and once more we were going down the stream. A Malay woman ran to the bank and urged us to turn back, but I insisted on going on. Once more at a bend in the river the raft plunged under the water until we were standing in it up to the knees; then it glided smoothly and surely towards the Těladn.

I prolonged my stay on the Těladn by a few days, added to my notes, and then went on to Kuala Teměngor, from where I visited Sara's encampment. About three kilometres from Kuala Teměngor, Sara's people, following the example of the Ple, have laid out a *hubi* plantation on the crest of a hill. The encampment, consisting of five shelters in gable formation in the open, and sixteen inhabitants, with a number of hens, contained an admixture of Ple. We met in the camp at meal times. All the inhabitants of the camp were fed, but my two Semang companions were sent empty away; they did not belong to the family.

The following morning we resumed our voyage. We were

in a narrow part of the river, between towering cliffs through which the Perak rushed in a narrow stream.

The rudders were forced deep into the stream to steer the raft past each of these formidable rocks. Chenbis was perfectly at home on the river, and at each of the dangerous cliffs his word of command rang out and the rudders lashed the foam. He was anxious that we should not be wrecked, for he was afraid for me and my possessions.

We made another halt by the Tangoi river. I allowed myself to be persuaded by my Malay servants to pay a visit to a Semang camp which lay, he reckoned, about three kilometres away. With canvas shoes on my feet I splashed along, in water and mud, through undergrowth and creepers. What a way! What a swarm of leeches climbing up my bare legs and driving me to distraction! One hour seemed like three. To crown all, we lost the way. At last, after four hours, we reached Sanko's encampment, hungry, and at the last stage of exhaustion. Sanko was a Sabubn from the Piah river, much under the influence of the Ple. He had a splendid *hubi* plantation and lived in a pile hut. We refreshed ourselves with sugar-cane and *mandioka* from his plantation, and then hurried back to the raft.

On the following day I was in Grik, where I met Puchok and his group. It was impossible to continue the journey to Sungei Piah, for I had run out of supplies, and had only three Mexican dollars in my pocket.

That was the end of the ill-starred expedition to Bělum, which, however, was of great value for my investigations.



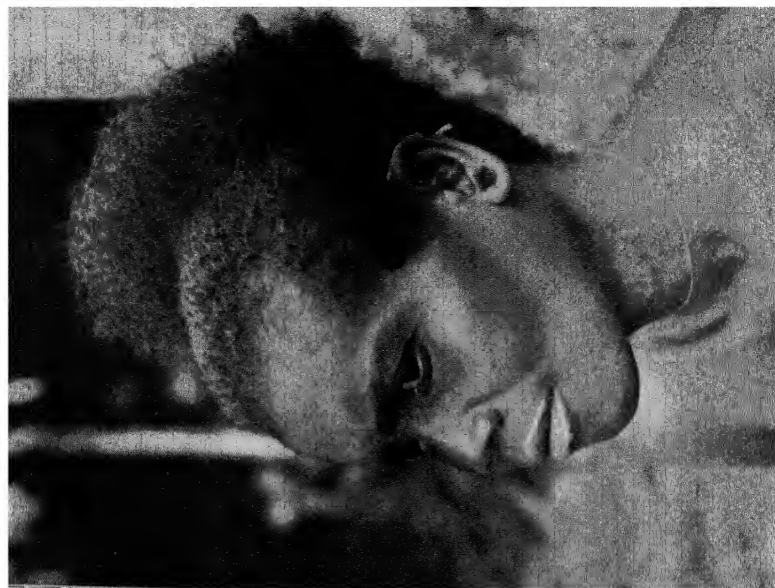
A CONICAL PANO HUT (*p.* 224)



A KENSU GRAVE (*p.* 255)



A YOUNG BRIDAL PAIR (p. 256)



A WOMAN FROM THE SALAG RIVER (p. 259)

## V

### ACROSS THE PENINSULA

ONCE more I was in Grik, completing supplies and baggage for a journey across the peninsula. I was now even more anxious to carry out my plan of fixing the tribal boundaries than during my last journey, which unfortunately had not turned out as I had hoped. This time, too, the prospects seemed very gloomy. Kēladi and Chenbis from the Tēladn were to come to Taiping accompanied by my servant Lebai, as it was my intention to make in their company the detour through Siam to Kēlantān, and then push into the centre of the peninsula from the east ; the route from the west appeared to be extraordinarily difficult. Lebai arrived in Taiping before long, but without the two Semang upon whom I was counting. True, they could be of no service to me as guides on the east coast, as the district was completely unknown to them ; they did not even know what Orang-Utan tribes lived there. But as their presence with me produced what amounted to a magical effect upon all natives I fell in with, it will be understood that in future I wanted to travel only in company of Semang. Even though it was more expensive, at least it brought me more quickly to my goal.

Lebai reported that disease was raging on the Tēladn, and that both Kēladi and Chenbis had been attacked. The former, he said, was already on the road to recovery, but in the case of Chenbis, the journey was out of the question. At first I thought the illness was an excuse, and that the real reason of their failure to keep their contract was merely their reluctance to have anything to do with strangers ; in the end, however, I was forced to accept Lebai's report.

I thus found myself compelled to alter my plan of campaign, and begin the crossing of the peninsula from the west, although, to be quite frank, I was afraid of this route ; the stretch as far as Tapogn was still too clearly in my memory.

The difficulties began before I left Grik. As it was difficult to recruit bearers, I wondered whether I could venture on the journey with an elephant as pack animal. In spite of the numerous elephants that were kept in Grik by the Government and by private individuals, I could not at first find anyone open to a deal. No elephant driver would risk setting out for the interior with a single elephant ; it would have to be three or more, they declared. I could not under any circumstances allow myself such luxury as this.

In the meantime, the fever against which he had long been struggling laid low my cook. It was impossible to take him with me on a long journey in this condition. At heart, however, I was pleased that he would have to remain behind. Lebai was even more pleased at getting rid of him, for now he would be servant and cook in one. Of cooking, he knew next to nothing, as he had never had any opportunity of learning, but he thought he would be able to satisfy my frugal requirements. And he did, for even a savage can cook rice and tinned fish, and there was little variety about my larder, except when an occasional fowl or some cocoanuts were bought to afford a little relief to the daily menu.

Lebai's gifts of persuasion were successful in hiring an elephant for three days. This would at least bring us to the Těladn, and there I hoped to be able to hire other bearers. Accompanied by Lebai, I took the familiar route to Běrsiak, and here we rejoined the elephant, which had gone by another way.

The second morning found us on the way to Kuala Temėngor. The paths were drier than they had been some months before, so that the march through the forest shade was a joy. The elephant, Ma Kěong, with the pile of baggage and its driver on its back, strode vigorously ahead. As often happened,

when I was in good spirits and the temperature less oppressive, I felt an urge to sing. I used to like singing, even in a dwarf encampment. My songs and my loud voice delighted them, and they often came up and asked me to sing, while they would look up at me in wonder, and at the end burst into peals of laughter. Sometimes they would try to imitate me, but they could not catch the melody, nor reproduce the fullness of my voice. The Semang talks very quietly and his voice sounds husky and toneless.

And so, on the road to Kuala Temėngor, I started to sing. "*Dann gehet leise . . . der liebe Herrgott durch den Wald,*" I bellowed out until the forest rang. Suddenly, however, I clapped my hand to my mouth and was silent. The animal ahead of us was dashing away in a frenzied gallop. I saw it for a moment, and then, with driver and baggage, it vanished into the thick forest. For a few seconds longer I could hear the despairing yells of the driver, and then all was still. Only the shrill screams of the *siamang* apes mocked us from close at hand.

Naturally we set off after the runaway, and we managed to come up with him. The elephant driver, however, gave me a lecture, and told me firmly: "Tuan, you must lead the way, and not sing any more. Ma Kėong is frightened of your big voice!" Thus we went ahead again, I forced to restrain myself. In the end we got so far ahead of the elephant that the driver lost sight of us, which gave him another fright, as he did not like being left alone. His shouts forced us to slacken pace and clear the way for the elephant.

At Kuala Temėngor we made a halt. Since the last journey the rest bungalow had been partly wrecked by wild elephants. Nevertheless this was where we had to stay. While the elephant and driver made their way to the opposite bank, Lebai and I remained in the ruined hut.

This time a rare spectacle was afforded us. A troop of elephants was trotting down the opposite slope to bathe. When they came to the bank they halted. With its powerful

trunk each animal sprayed sand and mud over its back and sides; and in some cases two of them performed this service for each other. Then they slowly filed deep into the cooling stream, squirting great jets of water into the air with their trunks. They went right in to the deepest part, where the water reached up to their heads. Undeterred by this, however, they laid themselves on their sides until nothing could be seen but the ends of their long trunks. Then they got up again and turned over on to the other side. And so it went on until, thoroughly refreshed, they lumbered back up the bank and disappeared in the forest, where they plucked their supper, some fifty kilograms of green stuff. As a rule the drivers leave the animals to fend for themselves, and in the morning follow their tracks and drive them back to the loads. Sometimes, however, the animals get so far away that it takes the Malays a whole day to discover their tracks.

It was a bright moonlight night. From across the river the two Malay huts gleamed like ghosts, the slender cocoanut palms around them eerily stretching their leafy crests in the air like long arms.

The Perak shone silver-white, with the dark forest fringing its banks.

"A little fear, a little courage, that is right," remarked Lebai, who was sitting at my side, gazing in silence, as I was, at the silvery, murmuring waters. How came Lebai by such wisdom? True, we were sitting quite alone in front of a tumble-down hut, surrounded by raging elephants, hungry tigers, snakes, and all kinds of monsters. But after all, it was not for the first time. Was it the influence of the moonlight night that made him weak and timid? Like all Malays, he had a charm for protecting himself, even at night, from unseen enemies. When the Malay lies down to sleep, he prays his shadow (*bayang*) to keep watch. "Now I am going to sleep, stand thou by my door and watch that no enemy do me hurt," he says. He then sleeps the sleep of the righteous. Should danger come nigh he is sure he will awake in time. My





SEMANG SWIMMING (p. 152)



THE TRIP PROVED EXCITING (p. 163)



THE BATU-RIEN AT THE MOUTH OF THE TADOH  
(p. 163)



MENRI SEMANG OF THE NENGIRI IN MALAY DRESS  
(p. 166)

cautiously expressed doubt of such a faith started Lebai on a detailed defence, in which he cited one example after another. Then he added cautiously : " We must only give such orders to the dream soul in time of great danger, as for instance, now."

This night, like so many others I had already spent in the forest, was safely passed. The path to the Těladn grew more difficult with every step. The elephant—the Grik Malays told us that Ma Kěong was the cleverest elephant for miles around—put out its best efforts to increase its reputation. With its trunk it pulled down overhanging branches or bamboos, cracked them off, trampled them underfoot, and so cleared the path. If it missed some obstacle hanging too high, a shout of "*koe*" from the driver sufficed, and the animal did what was wanted. So we went forward, ever more slowly, until at last the elephant could make no further headway through the tangled mass of broken reeds and branches. During the last two days a tornado had raged in this district over a breadth of some twenty metres. The line of its devastation followed the Perak ; a breach had been battered in the forest which the elephant found insuperable.

As the Těladn encampment was now not far away, I had the animal unloaded and sent it home. Leaving Lebai to look after the baggage, I hurried through the confusion, hoping to reach the camp. It had never occurred to me that I might lose my way in the wilderness. Just as I was clambering downhill, at a bend in the path, I suddenly found myself face to face with an Orang-Utan. It was Kěładi, but thinner than I had ever seen him before. He was on his way to the river to fish. He at once turned back with me to bring people from the camp for the luggage. On the way he told me the story of his sufferings and those of his people. I should see for myself ! He said they had even broken down my hut, to use the bamboos for building a strong fence round the camp, as they had been repeatedly visited by two tigers, which had caused great havoc in the plantation.

What Kěładi reported was confirmed in every detail. In almost every hut some one lay sick. Chenbis got up at my approach, and began to excuse himself for not having kept his promise. He spoke, or rather lisped, in such a low voice that there could be no doubt about his condition. A peculiar disease had attacked the people. They all complained of pains in the limbs, especially the joints, and also of great lassitude and fever. I cannot say whether it was simply malaria or something else; perhaps it was a wave of the influenza which had wrought such destruction in Further India.

Only the framework of my hut was left standing. The camp was surrounded by a high bamboo fence with two very narrow entrances (see illustration, page 111). I soon learned that Lebeh and Tebogn had met the tiger at close quarters. It had been heard repeatedly in the camp, but the more prudent of the inhabitants, headed by Pa Loa, refused to abandon the place and leave their plantation at the mercy of the wild beasts. They adopted the expedient of fencing in their encampment, and my hut had to be sacrificed. While the women set out to fetch my baggage, the men got to work to build a shelter for me. As I was forced to remain a few days in the encampment, I selected for my quarters a place in a corner, in order to be protected from the smoke of the camp fires. While I was reaching up, in an attempt to bring down the roof-beam of the old hut, it fell so heavily on my head that I was forced to my knees. My topee saved me. The good people gazed at me in horror. Mercifully, a sharp pain in my head and neck, which lasted for weeks, was the only ill effect I suffered, apart from the shock.

My quarters were soon ready, so that the same evening I was able to devote myself to some extent to the sick. I also discussed with several men the possibility of their coming with me to Tadoh. There was, however, little hope. Chenbis was out of the question. Kěładi was ready, but he could not come for several days, as he himself was still too weak and

his Bunga also was not fully recovered. In the end I secured a few bearers to go as far as Tapogn, but what was I to do after that? They consoled me by saying I could get bearers from the camp there. All this added to my worries.

In the night I awoke. It must have been late, for it was pitch-black around me, the moon having already set. Not a single fire was to be seen in the camp, and although I searched it on every side I could not distinguish a single hut. It all felt so uncanny that I was just feeling for a candle and matches to make a light, when a wailing sound like nothing I had ever heard struck my ear, so mournful and shrill that it made me shudder. It could certainly not be human. I sat transfixed and listened. The wailing had ceased, but now it began again, this time on my right, high up in the bamboo. It wailed and moaned: *yoo . . . yoo . . . yoo . . .* I remembered Kēladi's story of the Yurl. Although it made my flesh creep, I sat up and listened. Once more, but from the opposite direction, came the dismal wail: *yoo . . . yoo . . . yoo . . .* I called softly for Kēladi. No answer. Were they all really asleep, or were they all silent from fear of the wailing voice which circled round the camp like a ghost with its lament: *yoo . . . yoo . . . yoo . . . ?* I must have listened to this ghostly, intermittent voice for an hour before it ceased.

In the morning I inquired about the ghost, but no one would admit having heard it. I imitated it. Pa Loa said: "It will be the *musang* (civet cat)." "Was it perhaps the Yurl?" No answer. No, it was not the Yurl. No one had heard it, or would admit having done so. What then could it have been?

I distributed medicine, and gave food from my own stores to the most serious cases. Of course my first care was for Kēladi and Chenbis, as I feared they might have contracted the disease in my service during the recent trip by raft.

There was a girl in the encampment with a high fever, a child of about four whose name was Tempo. When I visited her, the little thing was lying on her hard bamboo bed, moaning.

Her head was burning. I was helpless, as I could not get the child to take the bitter medicine. Her father and mother, who were very anxious about the child, had all kinds of other remedies at hand, which they trusted more than mine.

During the night the child was delirious. In the morning I tried to make her perspire, but with no success. This was the parents' fault, who kept going back to their own medicine. In the afternoon, as I was passing through the camp, I saw the mother holding the child by the arms and making it stand on its feeble legs. The aunt was rubbing its limbs and little body so mercilessly that Tempo cried with pain. This was followed by the application of a blood medicine made from the sap of a plant called *Běrob*. I shook my head disapprovingly. "You're killing the child!" I said. The aunt shouted to the whining child: "Look, the *Gob* (stranger) is there." That was intended to stop her crying. Tempo looked at me with her fevered eyes, but did not stop crying.

It was already growing dark when I again entered the sick child's hut. She was quite peaceful. Before her the father was kneeling, spraying her bare body with some liquid from his mouth, and then rubbing it in. This was a kind of specific against spirits (*jampi*) which the negritos have adopted from the Malays. I advised the father to leave the unconscious child alone, but it was no use. The spirits of disease must be driven out,

Kěladi said to me: "The father is a great blockhead (*bodok*).” I asked some women, who were inquisitively peering under the shelter, whether the child would die. "Yes, it will surely die," one said. Less than an hour later a crying and wailing resounded through the camp. It came from the child's grandmother. Full of curiosity, I stepped out of my hut. I thought the child was already dead, but Bunga shouted angrily through the camp: "What, wailing already when the child is still alive!"

Though I had come among these Orang-Utan as an investigator, I remained to become a priest too. "You must

have another look before you go to bed," I told myself, as I took a cup of water and crept under the shelter to the sick child's side. On both sides of the bed huge fires were burning. From time to time a groan came from the lips of the child, who was unconscious. I was now convinced that she could not live very long. I scooped up some of the cool water with my hand and began to sprinkle the little one's forehead as one does to the sick. As I did so, I murmured softly: "Angela, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." I left behind me a cloth to cover the patient and went away in silence. None of the dwarfs had any inkling of what had happened.

I slept the usual restless sleep of the explorer. Several times I woke up. My thoughts always turned back to the sick child. In the early morning I asked a passer-by how the patient was. He could give no news. A little later Kěładi came, and to my question answered that they had already gone out to bury the body. This was a great blow for me. My Malay servant added: "Just now I saw the father leaving the camp with something in his arms. When I asked him what it was, he answered: 'Nothing.'"

"That was the body," Kěładi declared.

I wanted to be present at the burial at all costs. But Kěładi and the others said: "We do not know where they are burying her." "But I must go, we must find out." So Kěładi and his wife went with me out of the camp in the direction taken by the family with the body. Between some thorny bush and the trees we climbed a neighbouring hill. After about twenty minutes we caught sight of the party in a little clearing. On one side sat the grandmother of the dead child. In the middle of the space two men were engaged in digging the grave. The axe generally used for felling trees was so fitted to its shaft that it could be used as a kind of hand-spike. With this the hard ground was broken and was then shovelled out with the hands. Both men, relatives of the family, took turns at the heavy work. The father of the dead

child was busily engaged felling bamboos with his bush-knife, and splitting them to make little boards and mats. The mother with her baby on her arm, her sister, and the little brother of the dead girl were squatting to one side. The women were talking sadly together, or offering the men advice about their work. In the end they kindled a fire.

I sent for some tobacco and distributed it amongst the company, and soon each had a smoking cigar in his mouth. The negrito will smoke at every opportunity.

I took up my position quite close to the grave as I did not wish to miss anything. My costume was not exactly the most appropriate for so solemn an occasion, but none the less I was pleased to have the opportunity at last of witnessing an Orang-Utan burial. It was a sight no white man had ever witnessed before.

Opposite to me, at the other end of the clearing, little Angela's body was lying. It was covered with a cloth, but not the one I had left the night before.

The grave would be about half a metre deep when they began to dig out side-niches. Kēladi, who appeared to know all about the procedure, made suggestions constantly. Once more the length of the body was measured with a stick, which was repeatedly placed in the grave until the side chamber was of the required length. Afterwards the floor was scooped out until it was slightly concave.

When I remarked that the grave was not deep enough, Lebeh protested: "The earth is too hard, we can't go any deeper." In the end, all expressed themselves satisfied.

The father and mother now busied themselves with the body. It was unwrapped and washed with water, which stood ready at hand in a bamboo. A little water was poured into the open mouth, for, "She must have a drink," Kēladi told me. Thereupon she was wrapped in the mat and cloth so that only the face was left visible. Meanwhile, one of the men was lining the side-niche with bamboo mats.

A dialogue was now begun by the men, which I could not



follow. At last Kēladi seized a split bamboo, lit it, and sprinkled incense called *kemunin* upon it. He went down into the grave and, while filling it with the smoke, he said :

“*Sigot, ka kemunin kēlegn kudn,  
T’a cub de pai, dja sedap de pai,  
T’a de pai sumpign tanyogn lawod,  
Na wa pentis de pai bēlab, maken kendede. serig de pai.*”

“The *kemunin* incense is burning in the grave. Thou art now departed. Thou art now in peace on the seashore, in the place of the setting sun, where no tigers are and no sickness and no suffering. Now thou windest red blossoms in thy hair, *tanyogn* blooms from the seashore. Oh, that no other may fall ill ! Who would wish to make thee angry ? ”

If the piety with which the body was handled had surprised me, this final ceremony moved me to tears. I was able to follow clearly the sense of the words. How beautifully expressed was the belief in a life beyond the grave ! I had had many opportunities of talking with the Orang-Utan about their views of the hereafter. I learned from them that the soul at death passes out through the head, for which reason the body is laid with the head towards the setting sun. Another told me, again, that the *yurl* (the spirit of the deceased) goes to the region of the setting sun. In that land life is similar to life here, but there is no more disease, no tiger frightens men. There one winds red flowers in the hair or places them behind the ears as the negrito love to do. In spite of all this, one disquieting thought remains with the survivors : the spirit of the dead person is not completely happy. It does not like being alone over there, and so returns to the grave and encampment to fetch those belonging to it. It makes them ill and kills them in order to be united with them. The restless negrito, in spite of harsh poverty, clings to life. He does not want to die. He therefore implores the dead : “That thou mayest have been ill alone ! Do not come back to make any of us sick. See, we are no longer companions ; thou livest there in peace, while we seek our

food here. We do not wish to anger thee, therefore leave us in peace also ! ”

But the dwarfs are not satisfied with this. Scarcely is the burial over than the whole company flees from the grave and from the camp. They often wander miles before building a new one. One thought obsesses all : the spirit of the dead must not find us, so it is best to have a river flowing between us and the grave. .

The father himself took the body in his arms and laid it in the grave. He stretched out the limbs to their full length and pressed the arms close against the body. The head was bowed a little to the right.

Then the closing of the grave was carefully begun. Sticks were driven into the ground in front of the side chamber, small bamboo boards laid in front and lashed to the sticks to form a protecting wall. The earth might not touch the body, and if any happened to do so, it was carefully removed. All present scraped busily with their hands. Angela's little brother stood near, watching his sister's funeral with wide-open eyes. Then his mother beckoned him and he too threw in earth with his small hands. And how intelligently he did it ! I could not help smiling at him. Water was poured over the grave from a cocoanut shell and more water placed at the head of the grave.

Then they began at once the building of the shelter over the grave. Fires were lighted on both sides. Unfortunately, I could not remain to the end. I was asked to leave them alone. I complied without asking the reason. On the way, Kēladi explained that they wanted to weep. During the burial, however, no tears had fallen.

I thought this concluded the burial ceremonies, but such was not the case. This I learned the next day when, accompanied by several negritos, I was already on my way into the interior. I was told that the relatives weep in silence by the graveside, while at evening the loud death wail begins in the camp. A death is mourned for five days. I was surprised



THE AUTHOR WITH JAHAI OF THE PERGAU (p. 169)



SLOW PROGRESS AGAINST THE RUSHING STREAM (p. 169)



OVER THE MOUNTAINS INTO THE SENGOH VALLEY (p. 171)



A HALA'S GRAVE, WITH SHELTER (p. 229)

that I had not heard anything the night before. But they had not wished to disturb me and, in view of my presence, the death wail had been postponed. The considerate dwarfs had, of course, no idea how interested I should have been.

On the Těladn I was surprised to hear the following story, which was told apropos of the death. A few days before, a woman had died in Tapogn. As is the custom, she was buried the same day, and the camp was then moved some miles away to the Papan river. After three days and two nights the woman appeared in the neighbouring Malay village and asked where her husband was, as she had found the camp deserted. The Malay directed her to the Papan. She hurried thither and, with the Orang-Utan's sense of locality, soon found the encampment. In silence she entered the hut and took her baby in her arms. Those who were there were dumbfounded, but were even more bewildered when the child died the same day. I did not altogether believe this story.

The burial of little Tempo was a strange experience for me. I had constantly asked about the Semang views of death and the customs observed at burial. I had not always been satisfied with the explanations I had received.

When anyone dies in an encampment he is buried on the spot and the group move away at once. If they possess a plantation and so cannot easily change their position, the body is carried as far as possible from the encampment and buried somewhere in the bush, if possible at the other side of a stream.

The Jahai maintain that they do not bury anything with the body except the cloth in which it is wrapped, and this was the case at the burial I had watched. Water, however, was poured into the mouth and water sprinkled over the grave, and further, a shell containing water was placed upon the grave lest the deceased should suffer from thirst on the journey to the beyond.

A shelter, however simple, is always erected over the grave, rising from the foot to the head, and under this are laid the

personal belongings of the deceased, with the exception of those made of iron. At both sides, and at the foot and head of the grave, fires are lighted, as is done with the shelters in the camp. After the death of a member of the camp, the death wail lasts two days. Whereas after the burial only the members of the family weep at the graveside, all in the camp take part in the lament, the women wailing aloud, while the men weep in silence. A great many tears must be shed.

The period of mourning lasts a full month; that is to say, so long as the moon lasts under which the dead person passed away. During that time there must be no dancing or singing. On the last day a feast is held, of course in the new camp. The men first go out hunting, the women seeking roots in the forest, and where possible rice is bought. Then all is ready for the feast, which is brought to a conclusion with song and dance.

The Semang also believe in a dream soul (*ampo*). It is identical with the *yurl*. After death the *ampo* becomes the *yurl*. In dreams the soul leaves the body and wanders about. While it is in this state, all kinds of things may befall the soul. What is seen in a dream is reality. Kēladi explained: "If I have dreamed that I killed a wild pig, it is true. In the morning I tell all the camp and we set out to look for the pig, and we find it too."

About noon of the second day two Malays arrived at the encampment, relatives and friends of Lebai. Though as a rule I disliked having anything to do with Malays, this time I was glad they had come. They were going to fish in the Perak. I made them an offer to enter my service and accompany me to Tadoh, as I needed bearers. They accepted readily, and this assured my further journey to the east coast. Kēladi came with us as a bearer, and also four other Semang, including Pa Lao, offered their services, the latter to fulfil the pledge made to me by Chenbis.

We were already acquainted with the road as far as Tapogn. We met with no adventures other than those always incidental

to travel in the forest. We marched, as we always did, in Indian file, for the path was very narrow. Just as we had crossed the Rekam river and were approaching Maio, we plunged once more into grass and scrub, the height of a man, so that no man could see his next ahead.

*H . . . oom, h . . . oom, h . . . oom*, suddenly rang through the bush, sending cold shivers down my spine. Instantly the little caravan stood rooted to the spot. Each man huddled close to his neighbour ; no one spoke a word. We listened and searched with our eyes the thick growth around us. What was it? *H . . . oom, h . . . oom, h . . . oom*, it came again through the jungle, louder than before and from some distance ahead of us. We held our breath, but could see nothing. Then the roar broke out afresh, still louder this time, and scarcely fifty yards away, in the dense undergrowth. Kêladi looked at me and stretched out his right hand in the shape of a claw. The sign of the tiger ! The men drew their bush-knives and listened in tense silence. *H . . . oom, h . . . oom, h . . . oom*, reverberated, still from the distance. The king of the jungle had passed us. We were going east, he west, and in the tangled jungle we had missed each other.

Was this one of the tigers that had been causing anxiety in the Têladn encampment? It might well have been, for that was exactly the direction it was making for. What can a poor Semang, winding his way through the forest in search of food, do against this forest monster? If he is alone he is a certain victim. Lebeh's father had been carried off by a tiger while he was out hunting with other members of the camp. He had hurried on a few yards in front of his companions, with his blow-pipe over his shoulder, when a tiger sprang from the slope upon the unsuspecting man and dragged him off.

We of course camped again in the desolation of Bandegn. Conversation was kept up far into the night. I learned that Bejuan was still doing his best to turn the Têladn Jahai against me by spreading the report that I was a disguised head-hunter.

According to Lebai, he had already partially attained his object with the Bersiak family.

Kěladi told me an incident of his young life that I should like to record here. Three years before, when he was living in Tadoh, he fell in with a white man, who called himself Tuan Dato. He came from the Ipoh mines and tried to induce Kěladi to hand over to him all the Semang women in Tadoh. He said he would pay him well, and even offered him two hundred Mexican dollars. Kěladi, who was anything but a scoundrel, rejected the offer, saying that he was under the *bukum* (authority) of the Tuan Besar (Great Lord) of Grik, and did not belong to Tadoh. The result of this attempt was that all the Semang left the neighbourhood and remained away so long as the white man was there. What this extraordinary Tuan Dato intended to do with the women, Kěladi did not know. Perhaps he was looking for women for the Chinese coolies in the mines.

In this connection I enquired of Pa Loa what he knew of the persecutions that they had had to suffer in the old days from the Malays and Siamese. Pa Loa remembered very well this terrible time when the Siamese descended upon them from the north-east, driving the Semang like wild game before them and carrying off their children. Pa Loa was a boy at the time. Then none of the members of his tribe was to be found on the bank of the Perak ; they were all wandering in the inhospitable areas up the smaller rivers, where they were safe from pursuit.

It is really extremely difficult to follow the paths of the Semang. No sooner have you started than you run into a stream ; here and there in the sand a trail is to be seen, but it is soon lost in the water. On which bank is it continued, and where ? Without a guide it is impossible to find the way. Often, too, there is only some small sign, a twig bent in a certain direction, to serve as a signpost towards a new encampment. Sometimes signposts are stuck in the ground, often broken branches and twigs, which are ambiguous guides.



But when the Semang wants to conceal his camping ground from the uninitiated he of course does not leave any signs at all. Moreover, it appears that the Semang know every nook and corner of their territory very thoroughly, so that they know quite well where to look for their relatives and friends. Malays are almost as helpless in the forest as the Chinese and whites, and I have repeatedly encountered Malays who would only venture through the forest guided by Semang.

In Kriogn we spent a pleasant evening fishing. The net belonging to the two Malays did us good service. The Semang wielded their fish-spears. Kěladi had separated from the group and gone upstream. Night fell; the meal for the men was all ready; and still he had not returned. We shouted his name in all directions and two of the men even went off to meet him. When they too came back without any news, we began to grow uneasy about him. Could he have met with an accident?

We were discussing what steps were to be taken when all at once a small raft came floating down the river with Kěladi on board. His reception was none too cordial, despite the two huge fish he had hanging over his shoulder. He received my reprimands with black looks, threw down the fish without a word, and began to sulk.

At noon the following day we were in Tapogn. While Lebai was buying fruit and rice from the Malays there, Kěladi hurried off to the Semang camp on the Taogn to hire fresh bearers. Both returned empty-handed. The Malays refused to sell, and the Semang camp was completely deserted, a disaster having befallen it. While the group were away from the camp for a short time to fish, an elephant had broken into the plantation and completely devastated it. Only two huts remained standing, and the two inhabitants of these, both men, came to see me. As a present they placed before me some roots, a sugar-cane, and a gourd. What a contrast to the Malays, who would let us have nothing, even for payment!

The disaster had forced the Taogn Jahai to desert their encampment. I heard that they had joined others and gone to Bělum.

I was in great perplexity with regard to my baggage. The four bearers from the Těladn showed no desire to come any further with me, and I could not obtain any new bearers as there were none at hand. There was no alternative but to divide my baggage. I loaded the Malays with the essentials, and Kěladi, too, had to take a small load, the remainder being sent back. I intended to go on at all costs and therefore preferred to sacrifice many comforts.

The path to Bělum continued to wind along the Perak. Up hill and down dale it made its way through regions uninhabited by a human soul. We continually came upon deserted Semang encampments, halting stations for the forest nomads. A whole troop, with children, cannot of course undertake long marches in the day, for the group is compelled to look for food *en route*. Sometimes they stop by the river bank to fish, sometimes in the forest to search for edible roots. The halting places therefore lie at intervals of from six to eight kilometres.

In spite of the heavy loads my men stepped briskly along. In the afternoon we reached Lamo, where we spent the night. The following day we were in Trno. On the way we fell in with an elephant caravan driven by Malays from Tapogn, who had obtained supplies in Bělum and were now taking the goods home, as at Bělum the river is not yet navigable. When I approached the caravan, the leading driver was terrified at the unexpected apparition and his hand went involuntarily to the *kris* in his girdle. When he recognised the Tuan, he put it back, looking ashamed of himself.

In Trno we had a generous feast as the fishermen had been very successful. Over forty fish were caught that afternoon.

During my numerous wanderings with the Orang-Utan I had many opportunities of observing their powers of endurance, their bearing, and physical characteristics.

The Semang is an extraordinarily good marcher ; and even when he is heavily loaded he strides forward undeterred as though unconscious of the burden. His eyes constantly turn in every direction, and every now and again he will leave the path to pick up a fallen fruit, or to look more closely at some tree, or in some other way to break the monotony of the march. In endurance on the march he is far superior to the Malay and also, I believe, to the other inland tribes.

He never carries the load otherwise than on his back, where his bast rucksack, the *hapo*, is slung. This method is explained by the surroundings, for only so can he make his way unhindered through the bush. Each bearer adjusts his own load. He cuts the thongs, twists them out of bark, and ties the pack so that he can carry it like a rucksack.

When carrying a load, the Semang walks in a stooping position, to ease the pull on his shoulders. This increases his stride, while his arms hang free.

I noticed repeatedly that, even when walking unburdened, many Semang have a slouching gait, with the body stooping forward, knees bent, and arms swinging to and fro. Others, again, have a springy stride.

On the march they like to stop from time to time, lay down the load, and rest a little on a tree stump or branch. The Semang prefers sitting to squatting. Particularly when he is tired, he sits on the ground with his back against something.

When squatting, the whole sole of the foot rests on the ground, toes pointed outwards. The thigh rests closely on the calf, so that the buttocks touch the heels. If the man has a log or bamboo handy, he pushes it under him and sits on it.

The Semang are good climbers, though they do not like climbing. They have three ways of climbing. "*Changwod*" means going straight up the trunk, the toes and ball of the feet pressed against the tree, which is grasped with the hands, arms at full length. As they go up, foot and arm are advanced alternately.

"*Chinbodn*," is another common method. The trunk is

gripped at the sides with the soles of the feet and the man propels himself upward in jerks.

Climbing with the aid of nooses round the feet, as is customary with the Tamul, is called "*snriag*." I never had an opportunity to observe this method, indeed I never saw Semang climbing high trees. Lianas hanging from the tree are made use of in climbing, especially to bring down honey. I never saw a Semang eat honey, so never saw how these honey-trees were climbed to obtain it.

The Semang who live on river banks are all good swimmers and good divers. I often watched them competing against one another at diving. On the other hand, those who do not live by a river cannot of course either swim or dive.

There is no apparent reason for the statement that the Semang do not know how to build and navigate rafts; of course their rafts are very small and are used more for crossing rivers than for travelling along them. They do not, however, seem to possess a word of their own for raft, which may be an indication that they have acquired this method of transport from the Malays; as far as the building of large rafts is concerned this is certainly the case.

In the darkness of the forest they can see quickly and accurately; their sight must be extraordinarily powerful. Animals and birds in the branches of the trees they would see in a moment, where I could see nothing. In the same way they noticed fruits and edible plants where I saw only a tangle of weeds.

I did not obtain any reliable evidence with regard to their hearing. Certain definite sounds they seemed to detect very quickly, whereas others—they may have been everyday sounds of the forest which struck me only—they did not seem to notice. On several occasions I would organize throwing-matches, to see whether they could throw. They proved very good performers and I often relieved long marches with such contests.

Bêlum, which contains many Malay kampongs, lies in a

broad hollow at the mouth of a tributary of the Perak. I took up my quarters in the rest bungalow outside the village. Shortly afterwards, Penghulu appeared, whom I had already met once on my wanderings, and he was followed later by the *dato*, an elderly gentleman who tyrannized the Malays with his elephants. As he regarded himself as the sole lord of the interior he let his beasts wander about at will, sparing neither fields nor gardens, and wrecking and laying waste everything that came in their path. One of these tame elephants was said to be very fierce and to attack passers-by with his tusks ; he had already done this to two Malays.

Kēladi soon found the Semang's encampment. They proved to be Jahai from Tapogn, Jarum, and other districts, who were making for Bēlum. The women were helping the Malays to husk the rice. Their camp was built on the slope of a hill in the bush near a Malay kampong. The people were very approachable, so that I was able to take all the measurements and photographs I wanted. I had met many of the inhabitants on the Tapogn. I was particularly struck by two men of an unusual type, with sharply receding foreheads, such as I had never seen before among the Semang.

Many diseases were rife in the camp, and here also the people complained much of pains in the joints and fever. The skin disease, *kurap*, was also seriously prevalent.

The great spectacle of the camp was the woman I have already mentioned, who had risen from the dead. Unfortunately I could not get a word out of her, for she was very shy and timid ; her eyes showed this. As she sat there, almost entirely naked, I presented her with a piece of cloth, in return for which I was allowed to photograph and measure without resistance. Her husband looked a stupid fellow, and the two lived apart in the encampment, the woman with her brother.

Perhaps my story about this woman will strike many readers as improbable. Its probability, however, will be at once admitted when one remembers the way a negrito grave is built. The sticks driven into the ground, and the bamboo

lattice leave small apertures through which the air can penetrate into the grave so that should anyone be buried alive by mistake there is no chance of suffocation. Moreover, it is quite possible to open the grave, provided it is no deeper than the one I saw in Těladn. An adult might easily manage to heave up the roof of the side chamber and escape from the ghoulisn prison.

I had guessed that Kěładi would hardly have embarked on the journey in his weak state if he had not had some private aim in view. As it turned out, he was anxious to meet his father-in-law and take him with him to the Těladn, so that he might share in his children's plantation. Here, however, he was to learn that his father-in-law had moved a few days before to the Ple at Ulu Sengoh to eat *hubi*. Kěładi went the same evening to look for him, for he seemed to have an idea that some relatives of his were in the neighbourhood. The following morning he returned with a man and three girls. The man was Kěładi's cousin who had come over from Tahoh, also to look for his relatives, and he, too, had found that they had departed for the Sengoh.

I gave presents to the small group, and to their great delight gave them a *rampau* monkey that my servant had brought down from a tree with the gun. The girls were very frightened of the camera, which they took for an infernal machine. "*Na bedel ie !*" (He's shooting me) the smaller one called out, and could only be induced by force to remain till the photograph had been taken.

From the larger camp at Bělum two bearers were obtained for the journey over the mountains to Tadoh, in the province of Kělantān. I had to have them, as my men were in any case overloaded, and now we had high mountains to cross. The additions I made to my geographical and ethnological knowledge were very satisfactory. It was in the encampment at Bělum that I heard about the Ple and Temiar, whose territory was said to lie on the other side of the mountain in Ulu Kělantān, as also about a tribe called Karei, and another

called Jedek, also to be found in Kēlantān, but in a north-easterly direction on the tributary of the Pērgau.

We had a three days' march over the mountains to Tadoh. Kēladi handed over the leadership to the new guides. To begin with, the path followed the Perak and was tolerably good, but soon we turned off eastward and entered a wild district. The path came to an end. We drove our way through the bush over a steep hill. The descent on the far side was difficult, and we often fell or caught in the undergrowth. It could no longer be called a march. We had to cling to every bamboo to avoid sliding down. On the Mura stream we made a short halt and discussed how to continue. It was impossible to go on as we were. There were no further signs of a path, so it was a question either of driving through the trackless bush or rowing our way up the foaming Perak, broken by cliffs and rapids, on a raft. We chose the latter course. At once my men went off to cut bamboos, while my cook prepared the rice. Two small rafts, only just big enough to hold us with the baggage, were constructed at the confluence of the Mura, and the journey began. We had not very far to go, about four and a half kilometres, but it took us several hours. Now we were navigating quiet, deep water, at the bottom of which many fish could be seen swimming about; at other times we had to make our way through rocks and sandbanks. The baggage had to be continually unloaded, and the rafts with difficulty hauled over the obstacles. We were in the heart of a wild, uncanny landscape, such as I rarely saw on the peninsula. High, rocky cliffs piled themselves up on either side. How many thousand years it must have taken the Perak to dig out these channels! Above the cliffs the forest rose, seeming to touch the sky. We were not far from the source of one of the main rivers of Malaya. Little streams trickled on every side down the slopes, hurrying to join the waters of the Perak. Hardly fifty metres in front of us, a stag was nibbling at the foliage of a bush. It seemed to feel quite safe and was unaware of

any danger. Standing on its hind legs, it reached for the highest branches of the bush. A shot from the gun brought it crashing down. It leaped up again and disappeared in the undergrowth. Raya, one of my Malay bearers, and Kēladi rushed after it into the forest. It was, however, too late to follow the blood trail, so I ordered that we should go on, and they had reluctantly to turn back. Again the baggage had to be unloaded and the rafts dragged over the rocks.

While I was helping to carry the baggage over the water, I slipped from a rock and sank with my load in the stream. The only damage suffered was that to my load and clothing. I was to learn how difficult and dangerous it can be to wade in a river over slippery rock in shoes. A little way further upstream we had to unload again. Once more I was wading against the rushing river, in one hand my dispatch case with my papers, in the other my cameras, which I used a great deal on this journey. I slipped and crashed so heavily with my right knee against a block of stone that I could not move my leg, and sank. With difficulty I held my case and camera above the surface, but my head kept bobbing under water. It was a desperate situation, for I could not raise myself. My knee was damaged. The Malays jumped to my rescue and hauled me out of the water. I felt the wound; the knee-cap seemed intact, but the stabbing pain made me anxious. At the confluence of the Kao we were compelled to spend the night in an unattractive shelter.

We began to settle in as best we could, for there was no alternative. The floor of the hut was cleaned up to some extent and covered with *tapos* leaves. The baggage was stowed away for the night and our clothing dried by great fires. I envied the Semang, who had nothing to dry.

The place was well adapted to impress upon us the overpowering and untamable wildness of the forest. Here, amid the grandiose vegetation, one felt infinitely small and solitary. In this eternal silence the murmur of the Kao sounded like an unending hymn of nature to her creator. It was inter-



rupted from time to time by the crashing of some falling giant tree, which had listened to the murmuring of the water for decades and even longer, and now, rotted with age, collapsed, making room for many others growing up around it, ambitious to grow as big and mighty as their neighbour.

In such surroundings one became silent and thoughtful, nay, afraid. None of us spoke aloud or showed any signs of cheerfulness. Even the noisy Raja was still. Here some understanding of the Orang-Utan psychology dawned in my mind. These children of the forest are shy, silent, and meditative. One admires the greatness of nature on the sea or in the mountains; in the primeval forest she is overwhelming. In the forest one is merely nothing; you can see scarcely five yards away from you and are hemmed in as by living prison walls which now rustle in the sighing wind, now roar and scream as the tornado seizes and rends the crests of the monstrous trees; these are moments of terror for the Orang-Utan. Cowering he sits, terrified and trembling before the wrath of the deity who raves in thunder and storm above his head. In his soul's need, the diminutive denizen of the forest seizes his bamboo knife, thinking with the blood he draws from his legs to propitiate the angry god and appease his rage, the god who hurls the thunderbolt, smashing down the trees and slaying men. Then, again, in a moment, the awful silence, the peace of the forest is restored, throwing him back into that deep solitude which enters his very heart, saying: "You are all alone in this twilit forest; do not speak, for there is no one to hear; do not call out, lest he who reigns over nature should know where you are."

The forest has made the Semang what he is, the silent, timid, gentle, reflective primitive man. To the superficial observer the Semang may appear uncouth, crude, beastlike, unthinking, and unfeeling. He is none of these things. The forest drives a man into himself; it makes him perhaps melancholy and timid of his fellows; it oppresses and at the same time exalts; it is above all a protection against superficiality, and cherishes steadfastness. It quenches man's pride,

his lust for power and possession, and awakens in their place a quiet, contemplative nature. The forest makes its inhabitants loyal to their traditions and therefore happy. What makes the Semang love his forest, so that he always flies back to it? Why is he so timid of, and why does he so shun the stranger? Because the forest assures him peace of soul, of which the stranger with his trumpety civilization will rob him. He does not seek earthly comfort; rather, a thousand times rather, will he lead his frugal forest life in undisturbed peace of heart than exchange it for the cares and disturbing possessions of civilization. The Semang is no slave, but a child of the forest, to which he is grateful and which he honours with a deep respect.

The Orang-Utan owes to the forest his poverty, but at the same time his nobility of soul. I know no people on earth who live such a frugal life as the Semang. The Andamans, the Aetas, the pygmies of Africa, all are more fully and better equipped with the possessions of civilization than the Semang, for whose backwardness the forest is responsible. The dwellers in the forest have not reached the Stone Age. They do not know how to make implements of stone. Not because the forest does not contain suitable material; why the Semang has invented no stone instruments is, and remains, a riddle. Of iron and its uses he knows even less. There he stands, the tiny dwarf, face to face with the gigantic forest, and has to master it! How can he? If he lights a fire, the forest does not burn down, for the flames are soon strangled in the mass of tropical vegetation. He can never clear the forest with the bamboo knife, and he has no other instrument at hand. "Spare me and I will feed you," the forest says to its people. The Semang accepts this bargain and wanders through the forest, seeking food, roots, plants, fruits, and edible animals. The primitive implements he requires the forest grants him lavishly. All his tools are made from bamboo. No others are native to him, for even his wooden bow shows signs of descent from one of bamboo.

Thus the Semang appears to us as a relic of a primitive period, the bamboo age.

The forest is less generous in its gifts of food. For a small number of people it might offer nourishment for a few days' sojourn, but for a large number its supplies are inadequate. Thus the dwarfs are compelled to group themselves in small bands and to wander constantly. The natural instinct would be for families to coalesce and form a primitive society. The constant wandering, however, prevents them from ever building permanent dwellings, or collecting any considerable or better household equipment. What would be the good? Huts and household gear could not be carried about. They remain poor, destitute, the victims of their surroundings.

Has this great material poverty been a handicap to the Semang? Has it not rather made him spiritually free? He has been freed from excessive worry about food and clothing. The forest has always offered the dwarf enough for bare existence. True, he has had to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, but he has eaten it without undue haste. His spirit has remained free, untrammelled by anxiety for his daily needs.

The black forest night rushed down. The fire crackled. While Lebai busied himself with pots and pans the two Malays, Raja and Gila, stuck into a tree stump candles which twinkled peacefully in the darkness and were mirrored in the water of the Perak. These candles were lighted by my pious Mohammedan companions for the souls of the Malays who had dwelt here, that they might protect us from any danger of the night and do us no hurt. I had a feeling as of All Souls' Day. The Malays made no attempt to hide their sensitiveness to this uncanny place.

The night was long. Great fires burned before our shelter. But it was not the chill of the night that kept us awake, nor yet the bare forest floor, strewn with fresh *tapos* leaves; it was the dirt that fell down upon us continually from the half-decayed leaf roof. Now the men would sit down by the

fire, now they would lay themselves down to sleep ; it was all no use. Finally, my three Semang set off with great bamboo torches to fish, but the Malays sat round the fire talking till early morning.

Thenceforward we had to guess the time by instinct, for the day before my watch had been torn from its strap and had fallen to the bottom of the Perak to tell the time to the fishes. We slipped into our damp clothes and turned our backs on the Perak. Two mountains, each about seven hundred metres high, had to be surmounted before night. The path followed the stony bed of the Kao. For me it was particularly painful, as I found it hard to lift my right leg over the rocks and fallen trunks with which the path was littered. A pestilential smell enveloped us. Although we redoubled our steps to get away from this atmosphere, it lasted a considerable time. The path was very indistinct, but the Semang always found their way. Scarcely had we reached the sheer crest of the Kao mountain than we plunged once more into the depths, where we were greeted by the cheerful gurgle of a small stream. We were not allowed to listen to this long before we had to clamber up the bamboo-covered side of the second mountain on the far bank. High above, we were standing on the frontier of Siam and Perak. We entered Siamese territory without passport or customs. Thank God, these flowers of civilization had not yet reached these parts ! It was late in the afternoon when we reached the Tomoh stream, upon which Tomoh was situated, formerly a flourishing mining centre, but now inhabited only by a few Chinese coolies. We took up our quarters with one of these and made some purchases. I then dismissed my two Semang bearers from Bělum, who disappeared the same evening into the forest. They may have built a shelter for the night somewhere at hand in its shades, or perhaps they intended to make their way to the newly built but deserted encampment we had discovered in a dark gorge. They did not tell us. The sight of so many strangers worried them so much that they fled.

Passing the gold mines on the Siam-Kĕlantan frontier, we wound down into the valley of the Pĕrgau river. This is the point to which European and Chinese greed of gain has penetrated from the eastward. Machine parts which had never reached their destination lay scattered by the wayside. The promoters of the enterprise, however, had brought their sheep into the fold by spreading false reports about rich gold fields in this part of the forest and tempting money from the pockets of many speculators. Work on a large scale was begun but never completed.

We were in Tadoh. The *dato* of Batu Melintang placed one of his huts at my disposal. Kĕladi disappeared into the forest to look for his fellow-tribesmen. This had formerly been his home and he knew his way about ; it was here, too, that he had made the acquaintance of his Bunga. The same afternoon he returned with a band of curly-heads, among them his cousin Depu, whom he wanted to join us on our way east.

Meanwhile I had obtained from the Malays and Orang-Utan news of the Semang tribes on the banks of the Pĕrgau. There were certainly Semang there, and all the evidence pointed to their being Jahai or a kindred tribe.

I now announced to my Malays and Semang my decision to push forward to the Galas river, and looked round for a boat and guide for the journey.

Kĕladi urged me to pay a visit to the *raja* of the Ple, who lived higher up the Pĕrgau. As I hoped to obtain more detailed information concerning the Ple from him, I immediately set off thither. This *raja* was an old Chinaman, who was lying sick in his hut. Supported by his daughter, he came out to me. Now sixty years old, he had been living for forty years with the Orang-Utan. He had taken his wife, who was now dead, from among the Ple. His children, with the exception of his daughter who lived with him, were already married. Formerly he had lived in Berkeley's district, Ulu Perak, but was forced to decamp as he had fallen foul of the law. In his old age he was honoured by all the

Orang-Utan of the district. He passed as one of them, as their *raja*, to whom they looked up with respect.

From the Malays in Tadoh I first heard the word *Pangan*. This was the name they gave to the Orang-Utan tribes, but they warned me against using the word in the presence of Semang, who disliked it. For a long time I wondered what it could mean, and asked cautious questions. I always called the people by their tribal name, Jahai, which obviously pleased them. But when one remarked: "You call us 'Jahai,' which is good; but the Malays always say only 'Pangan, Pangan,' or 'Sakai, Sakai.'" Kēladi interposed, saying: "Pangan is an ugly name and means much the same as 'uncircumcised.' That is what the Malays call us here, but we say of the Malays that they are Semang, which means something like 'circumcised.'" Whatever the real etymology of the words may be, they are a form of mutual insult.

The Kēnta understand by Semang a legendary people with glowing eyes who are never seen, who do not know the use of fire, and who eat everything raw.

The Semang know of legendary peoples and tell one another tales about them. Old Bersiak would tell of the Běokn, very tiny creatures, and the Timpagn, folk who hop about on one leg but whom no one has ever seen; the Saiap, who fly like birds, and lastly the Kemer, who grow together in pairs, back to back.

The word *Pangan* is gradually falling into disuse, even on the east coast, being supplanted by *Orang-Bělokar* (bush people). The name *Semang* is now no longer heard anywhere on the peninsula.

On the first day of my stay in Tadoh, the *dato* fluttered around me a good deal and asked me for medicine to counteract a disease which was raging on the upper part of the river. He described it as cholerine, bringing speedy death. I suspected cholera, and gave the old man the medicine, which he was very quick in praising. But I ordered my men not to drink water from the river, as the river water contained the cause of

the disease. The Malay drinks river water, bathes in it, and uses it as a latrine. In Tadoh, where there are many Malays living closely packed together, this was most disgusting ; you would see a woman drawing drinking-water in one place, and about twenty yards upstream somebody "going to the river," as the euphemistic phrase ran. In this connection I can praise the Semang highly ; they are much cleaner in such matters.

The boat stood ready to push off. In the late evening Kěładi and Depu arrived, who were to accompany me next morning to the Galas. They were, however, very low-spirited, and in the night went away again from the huts. The next morning there was no sign of the Semang. I was deeply disappointed. I waited another day, and then, as they did not arrive, I set out with four Malays.

At the confluence of the Tadoh and Pěrgau rose a limestone hill of grotesque shape, about two hundred metres high. We stopped to view the many caves with which it was riddled. The two large caves, Gua Paiong and Gua Badek, stood one above the other. In the lower cave the Malays have fitted up their *kěramat* (offering bowl for the souls of the dead) ; in the upper one they wipe their hands over the damp limestone wall and smear the forehead with the water dripping down it. Limestone is said to be a remedy for headache. Whether this custom, which I came across everywhere among the Semang, originates in this cave, I do not know. This limestone rock is certainly treated with general reverence among all Semang tribes, even among the most remote, where the majority have never seen it. Among them all it is known as Batu Ribn, and plays an important rôle in their myths and sagas. I had frequently heard tell of this Batu Ribn, so that it was doubly interesting to find it.

Batu Ribn is the abode of various supernatural beings, the *chenoi*, the *hala*, and the *hala* tiger.

Months before, Kěładi had explained to me the origin of the Batu Ribn. Once the Semang had laughed at the Kra monkey as he was dancing. This made Karei angry

and he loosed his thunder voice and hurled the thunderbolt ; that was the little Batu Ribn. The *hala* picked it up and rubbed it with his hands, which caused it to grow larger and larger. The *hala* threw the stone away and ran towards the sunrise. In some way which has never been explained, many Semang were shut up in the stone, apparently those who had laughed at the Kra monkey. The stone slipped down to the Tadoh confluence. The men were still imprisoned in the rock and upon it sat the Kra monkey. When the *hala* returned, he found the rock grown to a huge size. He then bored deep into the rock to release the people imprisoned in it. A *tukang* (workman) named Dagodn came along. He gave the *hala* his *beliogn* (axe), with which the *hala* struck the rock. This blunted the axe. Seeing that all his efforts were vain, he returned to heaven. The Kra monkey is still to be seen to-day on the rock, and the people are still imprisoned inside it.

A Kěnta legend again relates how Chogn, the *hala*, once set out with bow and arrow. As he was passing the Batu Ribn, hearing a strange noise inside the rock, he shot an arrow into it and at once water flowed out. This is how men first obtained water.

According to the Kěnta, the Batu Ribn is the centre of the world, and they have much to tell about it.

I regretted very much that I had no Semang with me. Perhaps I should have been able to obtain further information about the legendary rock ; naturally, nothing was to be expected from the Malays, as they know absolutely nothing of Semang views and beliefs.

The Malays of Kělantān, whom I saw for the first time, were nevertheless of a different stamp from their cousins in the west, beyond the mountains. This was at once apparent from their build. A complete novelty for me were the bamboo huts floating on great bamboo rafts. I was told that these aquatic Malays spend their lives entirely on the water ; they move up or down stream fishing and trading a little for their livelihood.



The trip on the mountain river with its frequent rapids turned out most exciting. We were constantly forced at dangerous places to unload the baggage while the *perahu* (the boat) was towed with ropes. Often we were hurled over the foaming rapids at such dizzy speed that the water swept over the boat and drenched us mercilessly. We laughed and jested the whole time and all enjoyed the headlong dash. "*Tuan dudok!*" (Stoop lower, sir!), the Malay in the bows cried, as once more we swept down the rushing torrent. As there seemed great danger of capsizing, I did as I was told, and as I did so a wave swept over me. From that time we called the place *Tuan dudok!*

We hailed each Malay kampong we passed and enquired about the Orang-Utan. We were directed to another village. We also asked for bananas, and everywhere received the same answer: "*Tadah!*" (There aren't any!) Certainly the people here were most unfriendly. Their behaviour amused us so much that finally we made a joke of it, shouting to each kampong we passed the two questions: "*Ada-ka Orang Sakai?*" (Are there any Sakai here?) "*Tadah,*" came the answer; and then, "*Ada-ka pisang?*" (Have you any bananas?) Again came a shout "*tadah,*" with a long-drawn, final *ah!*

The first night I camped in the hut of a Borneo Malay. I hoped with his help to get into touch with the neighbouring Semang through the medium of a raft dweller whose craft was moored close by. He offered to seek the people out himself.

When I was bathing in the river in the early morning, I perceived on the further bank a Semang in the company of the Malay. A little later they rowed over on a raft. The Semang was called Bunga and was a Jahai. As he only spoke very broken Malay, my knowledge of Jahai stood me in good stead.

To begin with, I treated a shocking wound he had in his leg, and took his measurements. From what he reported I

discovered that the Përgau Jahai were few in number and that they came from time to time to the river to beg or buy food from the Malays. This the Malays confirmed, and they showed me the forest products which the Semang had offered them in exchange for rice.

I hoped to meet the man and his group on the return journey. My first objective was to fix the extreme boundaries of the Jahai, so I continued my journey. We repeatedly came upon Malays who reported the appearance of Semang in the neighbourhood of their kampongs. And so we went on up to the confluence of the Bala and the Përgau. Here we halted for the night. The *dato* appeared to welcome me and offered me his hut for the night. From what he said, the Orang-Sakai, *i.e.* the Semang, sometimes come as far as his kampong, but do not go beyond. This established for me the eastern boundary of the Jahai, which was later confirmed.

In Kuala Bala also I saw a strange spectacle. While I slept in the boat, my men camped under a shelter on the bank. The following morning, at sunrise, the beauties of the village came down in a long procession to the river bank to—yes, certainly also to draw water. But first they all “went to the river,” in a long row, and within sight of my boat! I got out on to the bank, turned my back on the sublime spectacle and looked at the rising sun, until the ladies had finished their toilet and were on their way home with their pitchers.

The following day, at noon, we reached the Nenggiri river, which is also called the Galas, or Këlantán river. The Orang-Utan call it Bërok. I was hospitably received by an Englishman, the inspector of a large rubber plantation. From here I made two excursions up and down the river. On one of these I came into touch with Semang from two camps. On the Kuala Ma I saw near a Malay kampong two women who, with their exuberant frizzy hair framing their heads, looked like Papuans of New Guinea. I followed them to their encampment, about six kilometres upstream. At first I was

very disappointed when I came across a few gable-shaped bamboo huts in a clearing. Several women were just returning from the forest carrying roots in baskets on their backs. I learned that the inhabitants had built this species of hut only a few days before in the newly laid out plantation. Formerly they too had lived under weather shelters like their cousins. While the men wore their hair cropped short, all the women had the strange, finely curling, woolly hair standing in a high bush round their heads. They also used combs, which, however, were all smaller and less ornamented than I had been accustomed to see among the Jahai and Sabun of the Perak. Apart from the piercing of the ear lobes, no mutilation of the body was practised.

In the auricles were stuck rolled *palas* leaves. One woman, who had certainly lived for a considerable time among the Ple, had her forehead tattooed. The ornaments on the cases of the blow-pipes were also richer than those I had seen among the Jahai. These too were of Ple origin. In various other ways also these Semang seemed to have been influenced by the Ple.

It cost me a great deal of trouble to learn the tribe name of these people. On a later visit to the Setong, I found that they are actually called Menri.

As I had now achieved my object, to establish the boundaries of the Jahai territory, I prepared for the return journey. On the way I also made the closer acquaintance of the Përgau Jahai. I hoped on my further journey westward to reach the natives of the Sungei Piah and Plus, concerning whose origin there was great uncertainty.

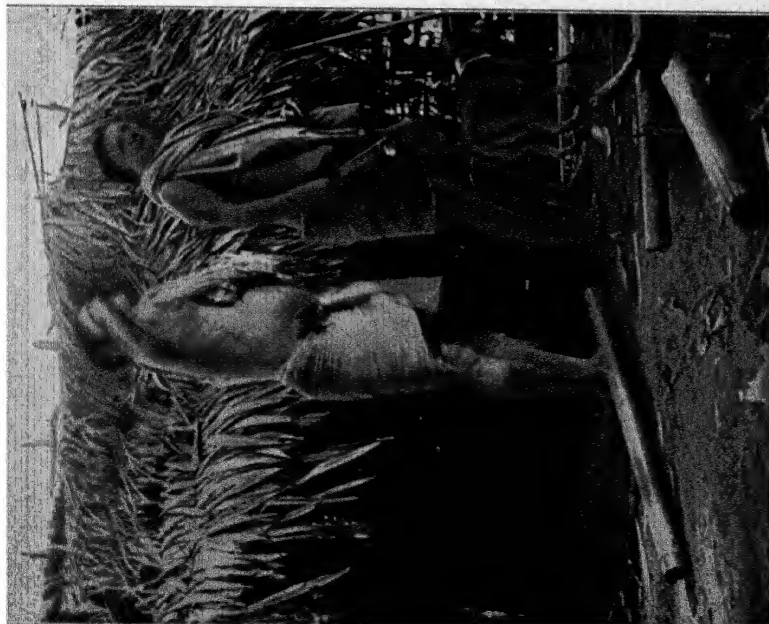
The long and dangerous journey to the Galas river across the peninsula had been crowned by complete success. I was now in a position to trace the exact boundaries of the Jahai territory. Above all, I had discovered the Përgau Jahai, who represent a more primitive stage of Orang-Utan culture; I had also gathered news of the Temiar, or Temer, who turned out to be a section of the Ple-Sakai, a fact which was

of great importance for my subsequent investigations, and finally I had made the acquaintance of a further Semang stock in the east, the Menri. The division of the negrito into Semang and Pangan, which still persists in scientific literature, is rendered untenable by these discoveries.

The journey back turned out very laborious and slow. In the places where, on the way down, we had travelled at headlong speed, the boat had now to be dragged with ropes.

In Bunga Tanjong I met a Malay, the protector of a Sakai group, who offered to put me into touch with them. Together we made our way through the mountain country of Bunga Tanjong and Lubog Bonga. We met with very poor success. We soon came to a newly built encampment, but the inhabitants had fled. Two shelters of the familiar kind stood facing one another. The entrances were blocked with thorny bush. Judging from the sleeping-places, the camp was for nine persons. We wandered over hill and valley and followed every possible trail, but all to no purpose. Not a living soul could we find. Dead tired, we reached Lubog Bonga, where the boat was waiting for us. Here I learned, to my disgust, that during our absence a troop of Orang-Utan had visited a kampong. They had come to barter *pétai* fruit for rice. No one knew where they were camping.

The Malays of the Pěrgau proved very unfriendly towards me and caused me many difficulties. Without their help, however, I could not get into touch with the forest dwellers, for the Semang are entirely in their hands. The Malays, however, thought that I had come to set the Semang against them, or to take them away, and for that reason they met all my requests for information with reserve or evasions. When my servant tried to explain to a protector of the Semang that I only wanted to learn about these people, he said, with a sigh of relief: "Oh, so it is not their bodies he is after?" After that he became obliging. I could see here what a lucrative game the exploitation of the Semang is for the Malays. For the *damar* resin which the poor forest people bring the Malays



SCATTERING THE BLOOD (p. 199)



WE TAKE SHELTER IN AN ABANDONED CHINESE



HEMPELABN AND HIS FAMILY (WIFE ON RIGHT) ASLEEP ON THE  
HARD BAMBOO (p. 211)



WEARING WREATHS OF FLOWERS IN HONOUR OF THE CHENOI (p. 224)

they receive a handful of rice, while the Malays, for a fair load of this resin, as soon as it is brought to the coast, pocket a small fortune. They are therefore very keen to keep these shy Orang-Utan away from any person who is likely to help their interests. Unfortunately, also, there are along the whole Pěrgau no officials of any kind to interest themselves in these the most helpless of mankind. At the confluence of the Sue, however, I did have the good fortune to fall in with a group of Semang. It was Bunga and his family, whom we already know. With Bunga I went into the forest to see his hut. At our approach the inhabitants left in the camp fled like startled animals. Bunga had difficulty in inducing the frightened folk to return by shouts and assurances. Soon one head after the other peered out from the undergrowth, and at last two women and two boys stepped slowly and cautiously up. All of them were wearing scanty rags of cloth. The women also wore grass girdles and *těmtobn* cords round their bodies.

The little group lived under two shelters: under one, Bunga lived with his wife, who was pregnant, and the child of his first wife, who was dead; whilst the other was inhabited by Bunga's widowed sister with her grown-up son. I distributed a few trifles, and also gave the man some money. When I did so he asked how many cobs of maize he ought to get for it from the Malays. I had to explain this to him carefully and obviously with pebbles, as it amounted to a considerable number. I do not know whether Bunga understood my calculation; in any case, he said at the end: "The Malay is cheating me then." He was very probably right.

Bunga told me about other Jahai in the neighbourhood who also came occasionally to the river, but unfortunately I was unable to remain longer on the off-chance of seeing them. He told me that the Pěrgau Jahai were already laying out *hubi* plantations, though not all of them.

In the rushing mountain river we made but slow progress. On the seventh day we passed the ruins of a hut which had

belonged to a gold-digger, whose tragic end in the dense jungle touched me deeply. He was prospecting for some one in Singapore. In the belief that he had actually found a site rich in gold in the depths of the interior, he had set out, accompanied by a few coolies, to try his luck once more. Although attacked by mortal fever, he could not be induced to abandon the journey. The fever raged in his veins and brain so that he seemed to have gone out of his mind. For this reason the coolies left him, and thus the sick man was left alone in the very heart of the forest, only his dog remaining faithful to him. As was to be expected, the man succumbed to the fever. The dog, however, remained by the body, feeding on the flesh. Later the dog was found still by the side of the skeleton.

In the evening we were back at Tadoh. On my arrival the *dato* surprised me with the good news that Kēladi and his group were waiting for my return.

I was anxious to start early the following day, but unfortunately the Semang bearers did not put in an appearance, so I set out for their camp myself. I met Kēladi first, looking very woebegone.

He looked very crestfallen when I scolded him for running away. He told me that the group intended to move with bag and baggage the next morning. There were fresh complaints about the Kēlantān Malays; life in Tadoh was not worth living. That very day, so they told me, the Malays had demanded children from them to give as a present to their *raja*. "Their fathers murdered us," one of the Semang said. Small wonder that the Semang more and more fight shy of Tadoh.

Immediately I moved over to the smaller camp on the Trno river, as Kēladi told me that they had already begun building a shelter for me there, which was very considerate of them. I counted eighteen persons in the camp, including a large number of children. There could be no question of an early move as heavy rain set in.

When, the following morning, the time came to start,



the group had changed their minds. As, obviously, they would not be able to keep pace with my little caravan, they elected to make their way slowly to the Těladn. Five boys, however, expressed their readiness to accompany me, and so the loads could be conveniently distributed.

The march from Tadoh over the mountains to the Sěngo valley and to the Perak as far as Těladn was among the wildest and most romantic of my forest journeys in Malaya. We were seven days on the way, above us and beside us only the sound of water, not a human habitation anywhere, not a practicable path. We passed gorges in whose depths mountain torrents roared. This was a region in which only the Orang-Utan can find his way, following the course of stream and river, cutting across here and there, and then again wading along the stream. The watercourses are his guides.

In the Měnggos river we met two Malays making their way to Tadoh under the guidance of a Semang. This was a strange meeting. The Malay's guide was the father of a boy who was going with my caravan to the Těladn; the father was on his way to Tadoh to fetch his son, while the son had joined me to bring his father to Teměngor. Now they met on the way, and, strangely enough, they had nothing to say to one another. The father went on with the Malay to Tadoh, the son came with us to the Těladn.

We passed some weird places. In one of these we were told a man spending the night alone under the rock had been torn to pieces by a tiger, in another a man had disappeared, no one knew how.

We turned off from the Měnggos and soon found ourselves marching through the stream and over the stony bed of the Běladn. The way was repeatedly blocked by huge boulders and fallen trees over which the water swept to scatter in spray among the stones.

Kěladi led the van, a load on his back and the shot-gun over his shoulder. I followed him, jumping painfully from rock to rock.

Before I realized what was happening Kěladi had dashed forward over the stones. Agile as monkeys, the others followed him. I looked round me in horror, for there was obviously danger at hand. While I was hesitating, I slipped on the boulder and slid down on to the stones, and as I did so I heard from Kěladi a shout of "*Běruang*" (Bear), as he dashed away. I clambered up again and could still see no bear, though I could see the fugitives making off. Even the Malays were hard on their heels. Exasperated, more by my fall than by the cowardice of my men, I shouted for the gun, and took a few leaps forward, but slipped once more and came tumbling down among the rocks. That was the last straw. I cursed roundly and called Kěladi a fool and a coward. There was still no sign of the bear. Meanwhile, the fugitives had come to a halt, and were waiting for me.

Kěladi defended himself. He was not going to take the word coward lying down. "What, frightened of a bear, I, who am ready to face a tiger! What I was running away from was *tebuan*. How can anyone fight them."

I could discover no sign of these *tebuan* either (a kind of black wasp), but a white man's eyesight cannot be compared with that of the Orang-Utan. The dwarfs had already told me of these dangerous *tebuan*. As, in addition, they belong to the police of Karei, the thunder god, they must not be killed. Immediate flight, before the swarm comes up and settles upon you, is the only way to save yourself from them.

A few days later, while we were camping on the bank of the Sengoh, Kěladi had an opportunity of confirming what he had said and proving his courage at the same time. The Semang were more than usually cautious in the selection of a site. They said this was a haunt of wild beasts and that one evening, some months before, three Semang girls had been carried off by a tiger not far from our camp.

While the Semang were building the shelter and Lebai was busy with the cooking, the two Malays went off upstream to fish. It was already growing dark and the Semang were

squatting before the fires, when we heard from the distance a cry of "*Rimau! Rimau!*" (Tiger!) With one bound Kěladi was on his feet and dashing away with the gun in the direction from which the sound came. It proved to be a cruel joke played by the two Malays, for which the Semang and I were very annoyed with them. Kěladi, however, had given proof of his fearlessness that day.

But it was my experience that there are beasts much more unpleasant than either tiger, elephant, or *seladang*. We were to receive fresh proof of this here. As usual we talked late into the night, and then one after another lay down to rest. Suddenly, we were all hastily forced to our feet. Things were crawling everywhere under us and over us. I must reckon this night among the most disagreeable of my life, for up to then I had never had the pleasure of sleeping on an ants' nest. This time our camp had been pitched right on top of one. The creatures must have been awakened into life by the fire and now fell upon us. In the darkness there could be no question of shifting our quarters, so I stuck my hands and feet into stockings, sat down by the fire, and waited for the day.

We were up at the first possible moment. Weary with the eternal trudging, I urged that we should build a raft. Kěladi opposed me stubbornly, saying that there were no bamboos in the neighbourhood. But I had seen bamboos growing at various places near the path. In the end I lost my temper; the dwarf also became angry, but would not give way. At last, however, in a backwater of the river he consented to set about building a raft. It was soon ready, the loads were shipped, and all nine of us were on board. Scarcely had we pushed off from the bank than we began to sink. We had used a kind of bamboo which, owing to its weight, is unsuitable for raft-building. "Didn't I say all the time that there were no bamboos?" Kěladi muttered. This made me realize that I did not know much about raft-building.

The greater part of the caravan made their way along the

bank, looking for bamboo, while the makeshift raft drifted cautiously downstream. Before long we were in a position to add an underlayer of real bamboo, and could at last begin the journey downstream.

Soon we found ourselves approaching a waterfall in the Sengho river. It would have been foolhardy to risk our lives and the baggage, so the baggage was set down on a rock, upon which we also took our places as spectators, while Raja and Kěladi undertook to steer the raft through the waterfall. My blood ran cold as I watched the swaying raft approach the roaring falls and then, shooting downwards, disappear for a moment, while the two brave navigators climbed on to the superstructure to avoid being washed away or dragged under.

"What does it matter if I die," Kěladi shouted before he was involved in the seething waters. All went well, however. There were reasons for Kěladi's pessimism and recklessness. He was love-sick.

Kěladi's father was a Semang of the genuine stamp. His home was near Kuala Temėngor. Here he lived with his wife and the two children, Kěladi and his elder sister, Penato. Kěladi was fond of talking about the happy days of his childhood. Every day his father would bring in game from the forest, often even wild pig. His father, indeed, was renowned far and wide as a hunter. In addition to the bow, he also carried a breechloader, which constantly did him good service. The father took his son with him on his wanderings, and in this way Kěladi, still a child, came into the land of the Ple.

Kěladi's mother must also have been a hard-working Semang, for Kěladi told with what industry she would go out and bring in great heaps of roots and forest fruits so that they were always generously supplied with food. The daughter seemed to have inherited from her her industry and forethought.

The children lost their parents very early and went to live among relatives in Tadoh, where Kěladi passed several years. Here he grew up side by side with a girl, with whom

he soon fell in love and whom later he married. This was Bunga.

Kěladi had not the plump appearance of the average Semang. He was slenderly built, but wiry. His movements were nimble, and never clumsy. His small head was covered with beautiful woolly hair. His features betrayed the negrito, but were not as coarse as so many of the others.

I first met Kěladi in Kuala Temėngor, where he struck me as very retiring. Later, he moved from the Těladn to Bersiak, where I had an opportunity of getting to know him more intimately. He was very docile and obliging, which I cannot say of most of the others. His mental alertness and adaptability gave me reason to hope that he would be very helpful in my investigations, but in this I was disappointed. He was quicker to understand my questions than any other of the Jahai and, moreover, had a gift of expressing his own thoughts more readily. Of course his mind, like that of the others, was stamped with a certain childishness, which prevented his managing to give an exhaustive account of views or customs. He had soon finished his descriptions, but none the less he was a long way superior to the others, who always made out that they knew nothing, merely because they did not know how to express themselves. Fresh questioning always further stimulated Kěladi's mind, so that gradually the most important things at any rate could be pieced together. I repeatedly observed that if I asked him to repeat, let us say, a myth, he would usually leave out some part of it. I was constantly obliged to call his attention to details. As I had these things told first in Malay, discussed them in detail, and only then wrote them down in Jahai, this was continually happening. This characteristic that I noticed in Kěladi was also true to a much greater degree of the rest. The explanation I gave to myself was that, like children, they had little capacity for connected narrative, and especially that they were very prone to overlook details. Perhaps it is characteristic of the mental state of primitive people that each

reproduces a myth, or even an event, in a different version or with different details. So not only in narrative, but also in songs of the Semang the text is not fixed. You hear the text sung ; and the next moment, when you are trying to set it down on paper, you hear a new version to the same melody and with the same subject-matter, but not identical with the first.

Nevertheless, I had reason to be proud of Kēladi and his knowledge. In this respect he was immeasurably superior to any other Jahai. It may be remarked, incidentally, how important it is in investigating the mental outlook of a primitive people to have as instructors really alert individuals. The average primitive can only lead one astray, not intentionally, but because the difficulty he has in expressing himself prevents his giving accurate information. And there is another thing to be taken into account. Primitive folk are always reserved when they first meet a stranger. They are all, without exception, embarrassed. They are suspicious and reserved, and wait, watching, until they have summed up the new-comer.

For several days Pa Loa squatted in his hut without speaking a word to me, and during the first few days Kēladi listened in silence to the others talking. I remember only too well how he sat among them, his arms clasped round his knees, staring continually at me with lowered brows, while I questioned the others. This went on until he thought he had satisfied himself about me and what I was after, and I began to perceive his possibilities. It is remarkable that Ramogn, on the other hand, always thought that I had come into the forest to play with them.

Kēladi's wife was a young person of very lively and child-like disposition. Kēladi's pet name for her was "*bodok*" (little silly). Whenever you met her she always had a smiling face. She was also less timid than the other women. When I was chatting with a man in a shelter, no woman would venture to enter ; Bunga, however, was an exception.





HITAM'S YOUNG WIFE (p. 215)



HITAM THE HALA (p. 215)



The young couple were tenderly devoted one to the other. The one child of their three years of marriage had unhappily been burned to death. One night it fell out of the bamboo bed into the fire and the sleeping parents did not know what had happened until it was too late.

The first time I had stayed at the Těladn, Bunga was ill. She had a severe cold and was feverish. Kěładi took her food and medicine from me. I once asked the young man: "What will you do if Bunga dies?"

"If Bunga dies, I shall not marry again, even if all the women want me, for I shall not be able to forget Bunga."

The longer Kěładi was with me, the more open he became. He became not only more trusting, but also more self-confident and bolder.

He gradually worked himself into the position of leader of the caravan, gave his orders on the march, and took little heed of my wishes if he thought his own plans better. This grew continually worse and would inevitably have led to a quarrel. I let him have a great deal of his own way as I was very anxious to gain a deeper insight into this Semang's mind, and it was on precisely these occasions that Kěładi revealed most of himself.

Although he was still very young, he exercised unusual influence over those around him. He was impulsive and put his hand to everything, and the others were completely under his spell. When during the burial on the Těladn the others began to dispute as to what should be done, Kěładi intervened. While the others were hesitating about carrying out his instructions, he took the resin and lit it, went down into the grave and filled it with the smoke.

It was not without cause that Kěładi was a sworn adversary of Bejuan. This was due in the first place to Bunga, to whom Bejuan had paid attentions, but in general he could not stand this talker. Over and over again during the night, as soon as a dispute arose, Kěładi's voice would be heard. A word from him often sufficed to restore peace.

I have already mentioned several incidents which bring out Kēladi's obstinacy. He was certainly a self-willed fellow, fond of having his own way. With this was combined a certain pride. He refused to beg. If he had no tobacco, he would begin to bewail his ill luck aloud: "What, no tobacco for three days, *susah* (awful)!" This brought him what he wanted, as I would usually call him up and give him some.

As I had hurt his feelings at Kriogn by a sharp rebuke when he had gone off for so long alone to fish, so again in Bělum I annoyed him. With two older men I was collecting a small vocabulary of the language spoken by the Karei tribe. When I showed it to Kēladi, he said: "No, that's not right." And when I said I thought the two old men knew more about it than he did, he did not like it.

He did not at all approve of my helping with the raft-building. He was the leader, who knew most about it. He ignored every remark I made. When I said that there was not enough rattan for lashing, he declared in a spirit of contradiction: "Yes, there is enough." When I wanted a thing one way, it was always done in another.

And yet, with all this, he had my welfare very much at heart. At every considerable rapid he began to grow nervous. He kept saying: "Get the loads off!" He did not wish to have an accident to me and my baggage on his conscience.

When in Tadoh he brought himself to leave me in the lurch and to slink off during the night, his fear of the journey into the unknown must have been very great. He looked very ashamed and humble when, after my return, I met him again. He could not find words enough to excuse himself, although I had made no reproaches.

After my return from Pěrgau I made an important discovery in Tadoh, which was of decisive importance for the investigation of marriage conditions among the Semang. After I had settled in the camp on the Trno and had seen something of its inhabitants, I noticed that Kēladi was living alone in a shelter with a young woman. I made enquiries as to who

this was and was told it was Kēladi's wife. After Kēladi's earlier assurances of his love for Bunga, I should never have thought this possible. I said, in jest, that I would tell Bunga. Kēladi only smiled in a shamefaced way, but the women who were about told me archly that I must not say anything to Bunga, as she would be angry and run away from Kēladi. In any case, whether the women were jesting or not, I here found Kēladi with another woman, who incidentally was ugly though it was true she was quite young. I soon came to the explanation of the matter, and indeed it was Kēladi who explained. He said: "My cousin Depu told me that my father-in-law demanded the return of his daughter; he wants to give her to a Ple. What am I to do now that Bunga is leaving me? My father-in-law is displeased with me. Here in the camp I met my former wife, whom I had married before Bunga. She was living here alone and did not want to marry anyone else; she was waiting for me. So I have taken her back again. She is good, and feeds me."

Then he began to run down Bunga. He said she was a bad woman, gave him nothing to eat, preferring to eat everything herself. She was unfaithful to him and was always wanting to marry some one else. And so surely he had a right to part from her. He preferred to take back his former wife. Immediately after his arrival he would return with Bunga to Tadoh, give her back to her father, and live again with his first wife.

So Kēladi talked when he was in a communicative mood, and we were already on the way home. But the same day I heard him lamenting and complaining: his heart was sad, for Bunga, because now he must leave her and become a widower (*tungal*).

He made no secret of his grief. While the others were sitting together talking, he began broodingly to sing. He was singing his love-lament.

At other times he would appear to have forgotten it all, and then again, without any warning, he would bewail his fate.

It may have been this thwarted love that made Kēladi so morose and so reckless of danger in negotiating the waterfall.

We reached the Tēladn safe and sound. Bunga had gone out to look for food with a section of the Tēladn people.

The camp had been moved to a place close by the bank of the Perak, and was surrounded by a thick bamboo fence as protection against wild animals.

When I entered the camp I caught sight of Bejuan. On the way Kēladi had said to me : " Bejuan is sure to be there if he has heard that I'm away. He's after my Bunga. He has already tried once to steal her from me, and then he called me '*jahat*' (bad). How can he call me '*jahat*' and at the same time ask me for twenty *ringget* (dollars)? Have I stolen his wife, or has he stolen mine? Who is '*jahat*,' I or he? " And so he went on indignantly.

I was now surprised to see Kēladi and Bejuan sitting amicably side by side. Apparently Kēladi did not show how he hated Bejuan.

On an earlier journey I had already tried to fathom Keladi's temperament, to find out whether he was jealous and afraid that Bunga would transfer her affections to another man. Kēladi replied : " No, for Bejuan is not in the camp, and the boys Lebeh and Tapogn call Bunga '*mo*' (aunt), so there's no danger."

On the last evening Kēladi was in very good spirits. But he would not travel any further ; he was afraid of the Perak rapids with our rickety raft.

That was the last time I saw him. Later, I heard through my Malay servant that Bunga had refused to agree to her father's demands. She preferred to remain with Kēladi, and so showed her great love for him. It may be assumed that Kēladi was pleased.

## VI

### THE RELIGIOUS VIEWS OF THE JAHAI

**H**AVING reached the Těladn, Kěladi wanted to wait for Bunga and refused at any price to travel further with the accursed raft. Nor did I press him very seriously, as Chenbis, the best and boldest raft navigator on the whole Perak, was well again. On the water I should be safer with him than with Kěladi. Chenbis was fully recovered, and looked as fresh and ready for anything as of old. It was true that he did not possess Kěladi's knowledge, as he had not moved about so much (he had never yet been as far as Tadoh); but, on the other hand, he was more practical. In addition, he had a more placid and courteous temperament and did not lose his head in danger as quickly as Kěladi; for courage there was nothing to choose between them. Chenbis was rather younger than his cousin Kěladi, but was taller and more powerfully built. After his first wife had left him he had married another, a quiet and—I must pay her this compliment—unassuming woman.

When he saw the makeshift raft, Chenbis too shook his head and immediately set to work to rebuild it, as well as he could in the short time I stayed on the Těladn.

How necessary this rebuilding was became clear no later than the following morning, when we became involved in the formidable rapids of the Perak. I had never before realized so clearly the danger of these places as now, when the Perak was lower than in the earlier month. This seemed to increase the height of the threatening cliffs past which the water was sweeping.

The heavy raft was not easy to steer, and consequently Chenbis, at the rudder in the bow, was held up at a whirlpool; the forepart of the raft was caught in the swirling water. We were whirled round and jammed in a huge hole in the rocks under which the water swept round in seething circles. The peril of the situation caused the crew to dash back from the forepart towards the stern, and the raft began to sink. At the moment of greatest danger, those who still had their wits about them pushed with their arms and poles against the rock to force the raft from its precarious position. They were successful. We came up again and got away. Chenbis looked at me in dumb terror. In this very spot, a few years before, three Chinese on a raft had lost their lives; we had only just missed sharing the same fate. With a joke I made the men laugh and equanimity was restored. "If *we* die," said Chenbis, "it doesn't matter; but if Tuan and his baggage are lost, what then?" The Semang always and everywhere regarded themselves as responsible for me and my safety while I was in their company.

After that the rudders were handled with frenzied vigour whenever we reached one of these frequent rapids. We dashed past rocks, sand-banks, and shattered rafts, the trees on the bank dancing from before our eyes. All the time the *barau* was singing with all its might, and the *burong-lang* (fish-eagle) planed ahead of us as if to show the way.

On the bank to our right a dark group of Orang-Utan stood in a long row and stared at us. They were my friends from the Těladn, who were just descending the banks on their way back. I called to them and we stopped. They stared at me without a word. No pleasure at meeting me again was betrayed in their eyes, no word of greeting was uttered. Mute, shy, almost half-frightened, they looked at me, though I had lived in close friendship among them for months. At last, after repeated encouragement, a few youths came over to the raft. A little tobacco brightened them up. Then they all came and squatted on the rocks near us. Soon they opened

their hearts and mouths and answered all my questions. Little Bértam lay sick on the further bank, so I was told by the father, Kunit, who was returning from an expedition in search of food for his family, having left the mother to nurse the little invalid. On one of the others I noticed a very beautiful chain of glass beads and monkeys' teeth, wound several times round his neck. This roused my collector's instinct. How I should have liked to acquire the ornament ! I asked for it, and repeatedly raised the price ; but it was no use, the man would not give it up. " I inherited it from my father," was always the explanation of his refusal. But others told me that the chain belonged to his wife and therefore he dared not sell it.

The two boys, Krachap and Lebeh, joined us. Now for the first time there was life on board. As the sun was pouring down upon us, first one and then another would dive into the water and swim alongside the raft ; while at other times the whole crew, including the Malays, would be in the water disporting themselves merrily, while the vessel glided slowly over the calm surface.

Further downstream, not far from the Bersiak kampong, there was a fresh surprise in store for us. On the left bank we discovered two small rafts, near which a number of curly-heads were standing on the bank ; among these I recognized Hake, Tajen, and others. They stared at us, even shouted to us to stop and come over to them. What could have happened here ? The people seemed completely changed. Before, they had always slunk away, and now they were even calling me. Unfortunately, the stream was too strong for us to stop.

I spent the night in Bersiak, this time taking up my quarters in the hut of Haji Malim, the brother of my servant Lebai. Before long several inquisitive Malays had collected and were staring at me as though I had been some strange animal. " Such a thing has never been heard of," they said, " that a *kopening* (European) should have done such a thing, venturing

on a journey like this through the jungle!" Possibly, but I was glad it was over.

The Jahai youths romped about the Malay kampong, but came from time to time to chat with me. In the evening they came again. I had given them some money. Copper after copper was given away for small pieces of sugar, cigarettes, and all kinds of trifles. Soon they had nothing left, nor any rice which I had advised them to buy from the Malays with the money. It had all vanished into the coffers of the Malay dealer. But that did not matter. Childlike, they took no thought for the morrow, or the day after. Everything that caught their eye had to be bought. Then, in true Semang fashion, they vanished for ever without a word of farewell.

The following morning I was in Grik, preparing for the further journey to the rivers Piah and Plus. But before I take my readers with me on this journey, I must recapitulate the observations I made concerning the Jahai conception of the universe and their religion. The expression 'conception of the universe' sounds ambitious, but it is appropriate even to the psychology of the Orang-Utan, for they actually have a conception of the Cosmos, and in their own way understand and appreciate the aims and objects of life. Scanty though they are, I will repeat these details here, for they throw light on the temperament and mentality of our dwarfs. To believe that the Semang are unthinking fellows, with senses and mind centred solely on acquiring their daily bread, would be to do them injustice. It is certainly true that their conversation usually turns on this theme, but I have already suggested how the forest stirs up the depths of the human soul and prepares it to entertain thoughts of supernatural powers, the idea of which fills the Semang's soul with fear and awe.

All Semang, no matter in what part of the peninsula they may live, or what language they may speak, fear three phenomena of nature: thunder, flood, and storm, the storm which tears down the giant trees.

Amongst almost all the Semang tribes the thunder is

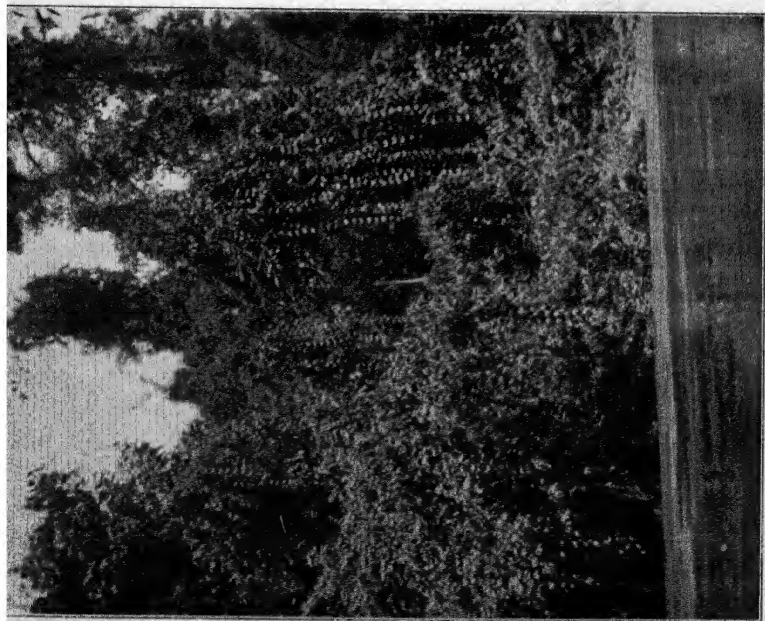




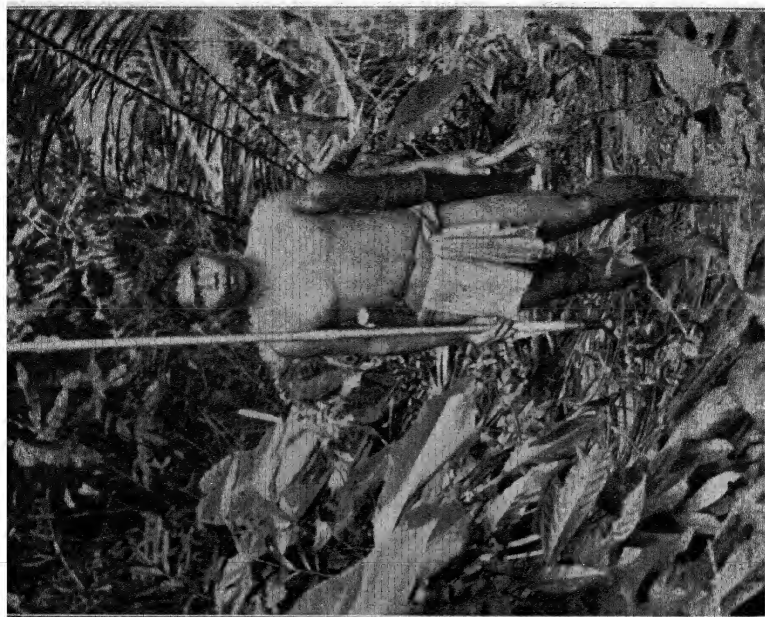
WHEN THE RISING SUN KISSES THE CRESTS OF THE FOREST GIANTS  
(p. 11)



EARLY MORNING CLOUDS (p. 12)



IN THE SILENCE OF THE FOREST THE ORANG-UTAN  
WANDERS (p. 12)



SAKAI WITH BLOW-PIPE (p. 13)



POSITION OF BODY IN GRAVE



CLOSING THE SIDE CHAMBER WITH BAMBOO,  
LEAVES AND MATTING



SHELTER OVER THE GRAVE WITH THE  
TWO TANKELS (p. 235)



THE WOMAN (HERE REPRESENTED BY THE HALA)  
IS TENDED BY OTHER WOMEN (p. 232)



THE PLACE OF ACCOUCHEMENT

The woman sits on the bamboo reeds, her back against the sloping rest  
(p. 232)

called Karei. The thunder itself is feared, but even more feared is the being who stands in the background and wields the thunder, the being whom Jahai, Sabubn and Menri all call by the same name, Karei. Karei makes the thunder, either by hurling stones through the firmament, or making his voice resound until its fearful echoes fill the forest. To obtain closer information about this being was from the beginning of my stay among the Semang the goal towards which my greatest efforts were directed. I had to follow a long and thorny path before I obtained anything like a clear picture of the Jahai views.

The Jahai have little idea of system, least of all in religion, so that none of them was capable of explaining the matter fully and clearly. I had to be content to collect material piecemeal, and was left to fit the pieces together myself.

When, at our very first meeting, Bejuan told me that it is Karei who causes the thunder, that he lives up above, that his appearance is that of a man, and that he is something like a Malay chief or prince, that he has made everything, and that he demands human blood—all this was already important information, but could only serve as a starting-point for further investigation.

On a lonely journey through the forest in the company of Ramogn, I asked him about Karei. In his clumsy way he gave me a bald but valuable reply. He knew of Karei and his wife Manoid, one of whom lives above, in the skies, the other below, in the earth. Their children are Ta Pedn, Begreg, Karpegn, and Karpegn's daughter, Takel. When it thunders in the distance, Karei is playing with his children. The food of these dwellers in heaven, he told me, consists wholly of fruits; there is no meat there, as there are no animals.

What Tajen told me once about the "living people" (Orang-hidop)—as he called the dwellers in heaven—startled me. He maintained that Ta Pedn has created all; Karei, on the other hand, has created nothing. Ta Pedn is good,

Karei evil, because Karei demands the blood of human beings and even kills them by lightning or disease. Further, Karei has imposed laws upon men and keeps watch to see that they are observed. Woe to the transgressor! If he wishes to escape punishment, he must perform the blood sacrifice, by which Karei will be appeased. Should Karei overdo his anger and thunder too loud, Ta Pedn will intervene and intercede for his grandchildren (men), saying to Karei: "Do not be so harsh with them; the grandchildren (men) are repentant; they are afraid; they look up towards us in terror. What have they done, why are you so angry with them?"

Several weeks had passed in the Bersiak camp without my being able to put into writing any tangible result of my investigations of Semang religion. Apart from the blood sacrifice, which I had witnessed one night, I never saw the Semang pray or perform any kind of rites. They always maintained that they could not pray; the Malay did, but not they.

Their views about the dwellers in heaven that I had learned up to then were also very varied and obscure. It was certain that Karei was regarded as a person, even if only as an old man with long hair and of black colour like the Semang themselves, or with the form of the *siamang* ape. He never dies; but how he came into existence no one could say. A stranger view was that Karei, the supreme being—for there was no doubt he was that,—was not the Creator; creation being ascribed to Ta Pedn, his son. Equally strange it was to hear Ta Pedn described as good, and Karei as evil. "Yes, Ta Pedn, who has created all, who cares for us, it is he who gives us our food," Tajen said.

Karei's dwelling-place is always fixed above. There he lives with the other dwellers in heaven, except Manoid, Karei's wife, who lives in the earth with her daughter, Takel. Karei and his children squat above on a beam, a kind of rafter in the skies, like that along which the sun pursues

his course from east to west. Before him Karei has a beautiful mat spread. Once, and only once, I heard that Ta Pedn and his companions sit upon this beam, called *galogn*, while Karei lives below in a cave. Altogether, there was much that was very obscure. I hoped to unravel the tangle by conversation with several older Semang. I summoned a theological conference, to which I invited five important Semang: Bersiak, Ramogn, Burong, Tajen, and Bejuan. These were joined by all who were interested in the matter. I placed my questions: "What are the Orang-hidop?" "Karei, Manoid, Ta Pedn, Begreg, and Takel." Karpegn was not mentioned. Their dwelling-place was given exactly as before.

That Karei was the greatest of them all agreed. "But who created the trees, the water, the stones?" I asked. At once Ramogn cried out: "*Ta Pedn—o de gēnun, o de jehu awei, os, tobn, gul, jehu remlei, jehu enregn. Ta Pedn o de sēmua.*" There I had it; all nodded in support of old Ramogn. "Ta Pedn has created all things, the bamboo, the trees, the rattan, the fire, the water, the *gul* tree, the *remlei* tree, the *enregn* tree; Ta Pedn has created all."

I ventured to raise an objection, hoping to confuse the Semang theologians. "But how," I asked, "if Karei is the greatest, how is it that he has created nothing? Could he not? Is Ta Pedn greater and stronger than Karei?"

"*Mana boleh bēkrja?*" (How is he to work?) Burong replied evasively. "*Karei, dia tuan, bēsar.*" Karei is indeed the great lord, and the great lord does not work; he makes his servant, his son, work! Again there was a general nodding of heads. So the battle was won. There remained with me, however, one serious doubt, to which I will revert in the following chapter. For the present, I had to be content. But I did ask one more question concerning the relationship of the Orang-hidop one to another. The talk had become very animated, and now grew louder and louder. Old Bersiak crept up quite close to me and gave a most emphatic answer

to this question, pressing a finger on the ground with each person he named. Karei and Manoid were man and wife; Begreg was also married; only Ta Pedn and the daughter Takel were not.

I put one more important question to the learned assembly: "Who made man?" To this day the Jahai owe me an answer to this question. They said they did not know. Men are the grandchildren of Karei and Manoid, though not the fruit of their bodies. An explanation of this was given me later by the Kěnta-Kěnsiu.

Like men, the Orang-hidop take food. They pluck the fruit from the heavenly tree, suck the juice, and let the peel and stem fall to the earth. From these all kinds of fruit-trees grow for the use of the children of men.

My knowledge of Semang religion was widened by Kěladi. He said that Karei is of great stature and radiant like fire; if a man comes near him he is burnt to death. For this reason no one can look upon Karei.

Everything that is bright and shining Karei likes, and he also likes men to offer him bright things. Above all, he favours mirrors. The transmission of these things to Karei is undertaken only by the *hala* (priest, or medicine-man). If anyone in the camp is ill, the *hala* is summoned to heal him. The relatives of the sick person give him a mirror, which he takes between his hands and breathes upon. According to the Semang belief the mirror flies up to heaven, where Karei sits before his mat. As soon as he sees the mirror coming he laughs with delight. He is now in gracious mood and supports the *hala*.

Karei and Manoid communicate with one another by lightning.

According to Puchok, the Sabubn, Karei (the Sabubn called him Kaiei) has the form of a *siamang* ape (*symphalangus syndactylus*). His whole body is covered with hair. This is also the view of the Jahai. It is remarkable that, according to the theology of the Sabubn, Ta Pedn is not the son of



Karei, but his younger brother. The Sabubn know nothing of Karei's children ; all, with Karpegn replacing Begreg and Takel, are brothers and sisters of Karei, though Manoid remains his wife.

The Sabubn, too, have no idea how to pray to Karei, though they know the blood ceremony. That the blood ceremony of the Semang is a real expiation of sin must be taken for granted. Its sole purpose is to appease the wrath of the deity, the transgressor against Karei's law expiating his sin with his own blood. Karei inflicts four types of punishment : in the first he strikes the evildoer with the lightning or fells tree-trunks to the ground ; the second method is to send the tiger against the sinner to tear him to pieces (the tiger is Karei's policeman) ; thirdly, he sends certain diseases to follow the sin ; and fourthly, for certain sins he insists on the blood sacrifice.

The form of expiation varies with the type of transgression. Of course, no one told me these details as they are given here ; they are rather the results of months of observation pieced together.

In the Bersiak' camp there were a few captive monkeys with which I occasionally played. Noticing that the Semang never played with the animals, I asked the reason. "*Lawaid Karei !*" was the answer. Once, on the march from Kriogn to Tapogn, we halted and all sat in a row on a fallen trunk to clear the tormenting leeches from our legs. I adopted the method of holding my burning cigarette against one of them. The thing curled up in pain and fell off. Lebeh, a mercurial youth, laughed, but old Pa Loa at once called him to order : "*Lawaid Karei !*" It will be remembered how Chenbis suppressed the frivolous Chago with the words "*Lawaid Karei !*" and how the children at Bersiak stopped their noisy play when Burong's wife shouted these words.

At first I did not understand the meaning of "*Lawaid Karei.*" Long afterwards it became clear to me that it might mean "That is a sin against Karei." At once, I proceeded

to establish the decalogue of the Semang by enquiring what were the different *Lawaid*. Murder and theft, strangely enough, were not included among Karei's prohibitions, at least, not among the Jahai. What appears strange to us becomes natural when it is remembered that both murder and theft are unknown among them. What was sin and what not? Chenbis answered the question as follows: "To mock a *běrok* monkey is sin, to mock the *kra* monkey is sin, to mock the cat is sin"; "*leglug ke mēnra, bera wa lawaid*" (but to mock a man is not a sin). Such a view of sin does not fit in with our views, and even appears ridiculous. Nevertheless, to me the sense and basis of the commandments are in no way silly. I must not ill use for my amusement a captive, and hence also a domestic animal—for it is to these that the commandment refers, not to the monkeys swinging free in the tops of the trees,—nor take pleasure in its sufferings. It is therefore a sin to tease the captive monkey. It is therefore a sin to laugh at the pain of the burned leech. It is therefore not a sin to laugh at a human being, who can avenge himself and repay me in my own coin, which the captive animal cannot do. It is apparent that such a law cultivates among the Semang gentleness of temperament and fineness of feeling.

A further group of commandments protect individual animals. These must not be killed. Among them are included, *e.g.* the *těbuan*, a kind of black wasp, the *sangid* and *chub* birds, and a few others. These are sacred animals, companions or servants of Karei enjoying his protection, and therefore no harm must be done them.

Whilst the kinds of commandments I have given so far concern the conduct of the individual, the following type bear a social character, inasmuch as they govern the life of the community.

Marriage between blood relatives, up to the second degree inclusive, is forbidden among the Jahai (and up to, and including the first degree among the Sabubn). Parents must prevent any too close association between their older children of

different sex. The father may not sleep too close to his daughter, or the mother to her son, however cold the night may be, tempting the sleepers to huddle together for warmth.

In intercourse among relatives the necessary respect must be observed, and this is best achieved by using the appropriate modes of address.

After the return to the camp, even after a long absence, there must be no open expression of joy ; it is more fitting to sit still for a few minutes under one's own roof without speaking ; nor should play be too loud or boisterous. To draw water from the river with a rusty black pot (or even a burnt bamboo), and to look at oneself in the mirror in the open air, especially within sight of the sun, is *Lawaid Karei*.

All these transgressions, and many others of a similar kind, must be expiated with the blood sacrifice. Among the Sabubn murder is included, and in a very strange way. Puchok explained : " If anyone is murdered, all the inhabitants of the camp must immediately make the blood sacrifice as soon as thunder is heard. Should Karei not cease to thunder, the murderer is seized and killed, his body is cut open and his blood thrown to heaven as a sacrifice. Then Karei stops his thunder."

I discovered several commandments, the transgression of which Karei punishes with disease, because they cannot be expiated with the blood sacrifice. If a father-in-law has come too near his daughter-in-law, or a son-in-law too near his mother-in-law (even though quite involuntarily and accidentally), or if they have spoken to one another, they have committed a serious sin, which is followed by the illness called *chemam*, pains in the neighbourhood of the kidneys which are followed by death. Only the speedy intervention of the *hala* can help in such a case.

Strangely enough, it is forbidden to throw a spear or bamboo before noon. This must not be done, even in play, if one wishes to avoid *pachog*. After midday it can be done

without restriction. I happened to see Chenbis reprove his younger brother Krachap Krachap for throwing bamboo splinters in the morning.

The blood sacrifice must be performed by every adult conscious of misdoing, as soon as it begins to thunder over the camp.

Neglect of this would involve terrible consequences. The Jahai and Sabubn say that trees would be torn up by the roots and hurled down upon the people, floods would burst out of the ground (the much feared *henweb*), and everybody would be washed away, not only the Semang, but also the Malays and Chinese, and that men would even perish by fire. It is because Karei is so merciless that they call him evil.

When I asked what Karei did with the blood, Kēladi at once twisted his face into a grimace and then said: "He anoints himself with it," and, as he did so, rubbed his own breast with the palm of his hand. The Sabubn replied to the same question that he only looked at the blood and was at once appeased, without doing anything with it.

Here I must mention the other beings who are connected with the Orang-hidop, though it must be explained that in this connection I did not acquire very clear information from the Jahai. Jahai and Sabubn believe in a number of small, bright creatures, who dwell everywhere, on mountains and in rivers, in trees and flowers. They are good to men and help him. They are called *chenoi*. They have nothing in common with the *hantu* (spirits) of the Malays. Most of the songs of the Semang are about these *chenoi*, and of these I will give a fuller account when I come to my stay among the Kēnta-Kēnsiu.

The intermediary between men and Karei is the *hala*. The Semang do not know how to communicate directly with Karei, or pray to him; the *hala* does this for all of them. In cases of illness the services of the *hala* are called in. He is the sole refuge of the sick. If the *hala* is on the spot all is



A KENSIU MAN OF JAHAI ORIGIN



ISAN, THE INTELLIGENT SEMANG WOMAN (p. 268)



MAKING WOMEN'S SKIRTS FROM AYAM BARK (p. 237)



KENTA WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL COSTUME (p. 237)

well, otherwise the sick person is lost. The *hala* helps by means of his medicines, but much more with his magic stone, which is called *chebuch*. The *chebuch* is a quartz crystal which, so the Semang believe, has a strange supernatural origin. It is also called *batu chenoi* (stone of the *chenoi*). No man can become a *hala* who does not possess one of these stones. Moreover, the true *hala* can himself imbue such a stone with magic power. During the singing of the *chenoi* song mention was made of the *chebuch* stone, which is also called "*serujau*." While Kēladi, Ramogn's son, was singing this song for me, I showed him the *chebuch* stone which I had acquired a few days before from Tajen. It was genuine. Kēladi said that such a stone comes from the *chenoi*, from whom the *hala* begs it. In the stone the *chenoi* themselves live, at the disposal of the priest—medicine-man. By breathing on the stone, the *hala* can do with it what he will.

In this stone the *hala* also sees all diseases. When the sick man appeals to him, the *hala* looks into the stone, names the ailment from which the patient is suffering, and immediately prescribes the medicine.

In the stone he can see the tiger lurking near the camp, and he then warns the people.

He carries the stone hidden against his breast. When he strikes his breast with the side of his fist the stone appears.

An ordinary mortal may see the stone somewhere in the forest under a large leaf (*lebag*). He goes off to fetch it, but the stone has gone and he cannot find it. If the *hala* objects to anyone coming into possession of a *chebuch* stone, it is hopeless ; he will never find one.

The *lebag* is a plant with long leaves. Dew or rain-water collects in the tubular stem of its leaf. One of these stems, particularly from a young leaf, is suitable for making a *chebuch*. The *hala* takes the stem, tears it off, grips the cup of the leaf firmly with both hands and blows hard into it so that the water is blown out. He catches this in the hollow of his hand, lays the other hand over it and blows into them.

The water turns into the *chebuch*. The crystal-clear water changes to equally clear quartz, the magic stone in which the bright *chenoi* dwell. Better than the *chebuch* stone is the *batu Karei*, the thunderbolt, which is found here and there in the interior. Puchok, the *bala* of the Sabubn, had one, but I did not succeed in gaining possession of it.

I returned to Grik with Puchok and his family and used this opportunity to make myself better acquainted with the Sabubn. They speak a language different from that of the Jahai, and although, regarded physically, they are pure Semang, this difference of language keeps them quite distinct from the other Semang tribes. They are much influenced by the Ple, with whom they associate a great deal.

A small group of Sabubn were prowling about the neighbourhood of a kampong in Grik. Soon Puchok also appeared, to take part in the Malay feast and to fill his empty stomach with *pulut* (steamed rice). He sang into the phonograph for me, taught me the language, and told me much about the customs and habits of the Sabubn. He was like a changed man, there was of course no further talk of cutting off heads.

Puchok was a *bala* who healed diseases more often by *jampi* (exorcism) than in any other way. He gave me examples of several of these *jampi*, all in the Malay language. My servant, Lebai, spoke highly of the power of this Orang-Utan exponent of black magic. Once, when he was wandering through the forest with him, they met a wild elephant which gave them a considerable fright. Puchok stood still, spoke his incantation, and slapped the sole of his foot with the flat of his hand, whereupon the elephant made off.

Puchok was much respected among the Sabubn, who all called him father. His position as *bala*, and his age, assured him universal reverence. I had repeatedly seen what great confidence was placed in his healing powers. Even the Jahai sick sought his help.

Puchok's explanation of an eclipse of the moon was that the moon is swallowed by a dragon. This is a terrible event for



everybody. Every effort is made to save the distressed moon by shouts, singing, and the banging of bamboos. Among the Jahai and Sabubn there is a widespread belief that the sun is every evening swallowed by a large frog (the *chankei*). Puchok was much hurt when I refused to believe that his forefathers could write, but had later lost the art. His proof rested ultimately upon the legend (of which I have already spoken) that in the beginning all men were Malays. To-day the Malays can write, but the great fire which the *raja* Bérók sent down upon the earth had driven the ancestors of the Semang into the forests. The result was that they forgot all they had known, including the art of writing. Puchok was therefore, as far as his tribe were concerned, an advocate of the devolution theory. I could not blame him for trying to restore the prestige of his race a little. During the few days I spent in Grik, I was preparing for my next journey and studying with Puchok and his companions the Sabubn language. I placed great hopes on the journey to the Plus river, because one explorer had declared the Plus to be the original source of the Jahai language. I could not believe this entirely, because it would mean the existence of an offshoot of the Jahai widely separated from the main group.

For the next part of the journey I obtained the services of two Sabubn youths, and the three Malays at once consented to go on with me. But on the last day a quarrel broke out among them. Both Lebai and Raja had quarrelled with the third *mafi*. Not satisfied with making the pious but somewhat unintelligent Mohammedan fetch and carry for them, they now began to make fun of him. We always called him simply "Mr. Gila" (Mr. Crack-brain). As I have already said, Gila always practised the greatest piety. Whether we were in the thick jungle, or in the cramped boat, in a Malay kampong, or rest bungalow, he prayed daily, morning and evening, and always with great earnestness. In silence he would spread out his mat, wind his turban round his head,

and with his face towards Mecca go through the countless bowings and lisp out the *Allah il Allah* !

When we were living at Tadoh, near the hut of the old *dato*, we used to be awakened out of our morning sleep by the latter's recitations, and in the darkness of the evening we were daily regaled with his shrill voice. His "*Rahmani rahim*" was trying to the nerves, but it was well meant. I noticed that at Tadoh Mr. Gila never went through his prayers alone, but, at the first sound of the old man's voice, would quickly wind his turban round his head and rush to the door to go and assist him.

When, a few days later, in the circle of my companions, I remarked that the girls in Tadoh were much prettier than their sisters in Perak, and suggested that they would do well to seek their marriage partners there, Raja grinned, confirmed my remark, and began making fun of Gila. He said he had quite lost his head (whence his name Gila) ; that when he slunk over daily to the *dato's*, it was not for *sembahyang* (prayer), but because there was a pretty girl there, with whom he had fallen hopelessly in love. Gila only grinned and said nothing. While I can testify to Mr. Gila as a pious Mohammedan, I cannot say the same of the other two. I believe that Labai and Raja were a couple of hardened sinners, who thought little of prayer.

Allah had endowed Mr. Gila more generously with piety than with wits and ability, so he was not only teased openly and in secret, but was also exploited. He was always given the heaviest load, and often the others imposed all sorts of tasks upon him. Mr. Gila did everything and suspected nothing, he was too innocent. As he was of clumsy build, he was always making a mess of things. He was constantly tumbling out of the boat into the river, especially when he tried to put on a little extra speed. These accidents amused us at his expense. All the same, I must say that Mr. Gila always did his best. He also appeared to be reliable. So I did not like to see him being pushed on one side. But, as I did not want to interfere

in the quarrel of the Malays, I let matters take their course. I was quite content that some one else should take his place.

With the raft we had left behind at Kuala Këndrong, we set out on our journey. Puchok had hurried on overland, and was waiting for us in Gandar, where he arrived two days before us. As they always did, the Sabubn had made a clearing here, too. They are markedly more under the influence of the Ple than are the Jahai, and every group laid out small *hubi* plantations. Many planted dry rice too, but without renouncing their nomadic existence: the forest seems no longer able to support these people unaided. Since the Semang gave up the bow, they have had to reduce their consumption of meat, for they cannot kill big game of any kind with the blow-pipe. It remains a riddle why the bow was given up. It had not lost its value, for there is plenty of big game wandering about the forest. It never was regarded as a weapon, because war is unknown among the Semang. I have never heard of the Semang fighting among themselves, apart from a bald story I heard from the Kënta, who said that their fathers had fought the Kënsiu. That the bow was never used as a weapon of war is most clearly shown by the fact that the corresponding protection, the shield, is not found. The Semang know neither shield nor armour because they know nothing of war.

Is it possible that contact with the Malays, with whom they barter, has caused the Semang to change their original mode of life? If this is the case, the same thing has happened among this, the most conservative section of mankind, that has been repeatedly observed in the case of many other races: contact with a foreign people shakes them out of their lethargy and stimulates their creative energy.

In Gandar, Pa Loa's statement was confirmed that the habits of the Sabubn are more lax than those of the Jahai. I discussed this subject with old Puchok and Gandar. They admitted candidly that a man may have intercourse with his neighbour's wife, or that a woman may have two husbands if

she likes ; such a thing is in no way regarded as an offence. It made no difference when I referred to the Jahai and remarked that they regard such a state of affairs as indecent and a crime against Karei. Puchok replied: "They have *lain hukum* (a different way of life, law), and we have *lain hukum*." With that the matter was settled. In this, too, the influence of the Ple is apparent, among whom the same laxity is the rule, whereas none of the other Semang permit such conduct.

When we were approaching Bender, the second Sabubn encampment, my appearance caused a great panic. The whole group dashed off into the forest. After a long time one of the boys succeeded in bringing up a young woman, a Ple, with a beautifully tattooed forehead. We tried following the people into the forest, but in vain ; no one was to be seen.

We spent the night on the left bank of the Perak, in the camp of a certain Goh. This was the first Semang I had seen wearing trousers. Goh was obviously a half-breed, whether with Ple or Malay was not apparent. A single hut on very high piles formed the encampment, which in itself showed foreign influence. I had a shelter built for myself, as I did not feel inclined to camp in the hut, which was in bad repair and draughty. Towards evening a heavy thunderstorm came on. I was sitting with my legs curled under me, under a leaky roof of leaves, staring up at the hut. I felt sure that there would be a blood sacrifice, for the thunder was crashing noisily and coming nearer and nearer all the time. I was not mistaken. Soon a woman came out to the door and called out anxiously: "*Karei, sod!*" (Karei, it is enough!); but it was not enough, Karei continued to vent his wrath. After each flash of lightning the woman dashed out and repeated the same formula, or prayer. It was all to no purpose ; Karei was there, and the storm raged over us. Then I saw her standing outside, in her right hand the split bamboo, in her left another bamboo containing the blood mixture, which she began to scatter towards heaven. Each time she did this she

cried in a loud voice : “ *Oh Karei ! Oh Karei, ikn ta dos !* ” (I have no more guilt !).

The woman made the wound at the entrance of the hut with the *tunkoi*-knife (bamboo splinter). With the flat surface she then struck the calf of her leg with a loud slapping sound, and then stabbed it with the sharp edge until the blood dripped down.

With this the ceremony was at an end. I sat under the roof of leaves, bowed over the phonograph to protect it from the drippings. I had been engaged in recording some songs when the storm broke and frightened away my singers.

Now the storm came over and blew down the roof over my head. I sat buried under it, trying to protect the machine and record with my body. In the end, the Malays had to come out in the rain to put my roof back into position.

The following morning I woke with my face swollen from mosquito bites.

We did not require the raft for the next stage of our journey, as we were going by the land route towards the middle Piah river.

Goh was my guide and bearer. For lack of a second bearer I enlisted the services of a young woman who struggled along with part of the load. Unfortunately she was not strong enough, besides suffering from asthma, and she failed us when it came to mountain climbing. I had to take the load from her, but on a steep ascent I fell with it. After so many days of travelling by raft we took very badly to marching in the swampy Janin stream, especially as we were surprised by a drenching downpour which wet us to the skin. The march lasted from eight in the morning until six in the evening, during which time we had scarcely an hour with dry ground under our feet. Hour after hour we splashed along through water and morass.

About noon we reached Piah, but left again soon after, and in the evening, after going out of our way a good deal, we reached the camp of Tepogn and took up our quarters

in the hut of Goh's brother. His mother is said to have been a Malay, his father a Sabubn.

He swaggered past me in *baju*, *sarong*, and the little red cap with a tassel, giving himself airs. Ple influence was growing stronger as we advanced southwards.

With new bearers, we went over the mountains to the Piah. Higher and higher we climbed without once seeing a view. The barking of a dog suddenly startled us and betrayed a group of Semang who were looking for *damar* resin, high up in the mountains. From this the Semang make torches, wrapping the resin in a funnel-shaped leaf and binding it with rattan. Placed in a stand, this kind of lamp lights the interior of a hut quite tolerably. Yet I have never seen this invention among the Jahai and pure Sabubn. Naturally they prefer to sell the resin to the Malays, who trade in it.

The mountains dropped steeply to the Piah river. In the distance we could hear it rushing, but could not see ten paces ahead. Pleased to be near our goal, we hurried down the slope as well as the soft, clayey soil permitted. The trunk of a huge tree, felled for this purpose, served as a bridge over the rushing Piah. We were in an abandoned plantation. The thinner the forest became the thicker grew the scrub. Cautiously we climbed from one trunk to another. At the forest edge we discovered two Ple shelters. The yellow creatures within huddled together and gazed at us anxiously, as we made our way past them towards the freshly made plantation.

We were in the Ple camp, where I discovered some Semang women with Ple husbands. The majority, however, were Ple. I had difficulty in finding quarters for the night, and it was still more difficult to hire bearers. No one would come, until I threatened to remain and eat them out of house and home. That did the trick. Soon, two men were standing before me, ready, they declared, to help us on the following day.

I will not describe the Ple in detail here, as this time I had not come to study them. Early next morning the inhabitants of the camp watched me leave with relief. We splashed through the water of a stream up some hills towards the source. We had our midday rest in the plantation of a Sabubn who was lying sick and crippled under his shelter. Here I made another attempt to photograph my Ple bearers, which so far I had not succeeded in doing. I had already persuaded the crippled Sabubn. We both tried to persuade them, and I offered them many presents, but it was no use. "No, not here," they cried in horror. "You can do it up in his father-in-law's hut." So we went on, the two bearers ahead and the lame Sabubn at my side. I had a lot of questions to ask him about things concerning which I had never been able to obtain any information from the timid Ple. This man described the Sabubn as Semang, which was the first time I heard this view. From him I learned that the Sabubn territory stretches nearly to Lassah on the Plus. The most southerly encampment is on the Kenco, the tributary of the Plus. He told me that their forefathers had used the bow, but that to-day it was entirely unknown here. He had never heard of the Jahai having entered this district. I did, as a matter of fact, come across a few individual Jahai among the Sabubn, *e.g.* one in Gandar and another on the Dala river, but these had come over from the Jahai territory. It may have been upon the evidence of such solitary individuals that a certain explorer based his theory that Jahai are to be found in the Piah-Plus area. The theory, however, was not substantiated; the Jahai were completely unknown here. While we were engaged in earnest discussion, our Ple bearers suddenly disappeared, and when we reached the big hut belonging to my companion's father-in-law we were very surprised to find the baggage, but not the bearers. They had made off for fear of being photographed, and had not even asked for their wages. So again I found myself without bearers, which was very exasperating, as I could not continue without them; nevertheless, I

deposited the wages due to the fugitives. Fortunately, two Sabubn youths appeared, and with them and the friendly householder, a handsome Ple with a fine beard—he reminded me very much of a fair South Sea Islander—I set out again.

For the last time we spent the night on the Behei river. An abandoned Chinese tin mine served as our inn. While the Malays and I made our beds on the field oven, the Orang-Utan slept on the ground below. Before long a heavy thunderstorm broke over us and tremendous volumes of water poured down from the mountains, turning our refuge into an island surrounded by muddy water. After that sleep was difficult, for the corrugated iron roof leaked. My bruised feet were hurting me, for the long marching in water and mud had torn the soles of my feet, which made every step painful. The Malays were not much better off.

While I was dreaming into space and listening to the splashing of the rain, I noticed something crawling over my bare arm. Mechanically I picked the thing off and threw it away. It fell on my servant. What could it have been? We were all quickly on our feet, searching our clothes and blankets by candlelight. There was nothing to be found, and yet there must have been something there, for I had felt it, and my servant had seen it. We guessed that it was a scorpion. As our searches produced nothing, we once more shook out all the blankets and then lay down again to rest. In the morning we started the hunt afresh; searching everywhere, in the end we tried the small tin box containing the photographic material and my clothes. There I found the enemy resting comfortably in a shirt. As we had thought, it turned out to be a scorpion; we condemned it to death, and at once burned it.

The final stage of the journey from Behai to Lassah was not long, but it was difficult. For more than half an hour we waded, up to our hips in the river. And indeed we could congratulate ourselves that the water had already dropped a little; otherwise we should not have progressed at all, but



must have spent a day of involuntary rest in this desolate spot. I was already more than anxious to get out of the forest and swamp again and see the sun. At last we entered a rubber plantation, the first sign of civilization. We were in Lassah, on the bank of the Plus river. I quickly threw off my wet clothes, and sent them drifting down the river. That was my farewell to the forest. A bathe freshened us up again, and with clean clothes I was once more able to enjoy life. A car quickly took me to the railway, after sixty days of marching in the thickest forest of the tropics.

The first newspaper I saw on the station showed me that I was two days ahead in my dates.

## VII

### AMONG THE KĒNTA-BOGN IN KEDAH

**A**S the main objective of my journey was to study, if possible, all the Semang tribes, I was forced in time to bid a final farewell to the Jahai and Sabubn, and once more take up my wanderer's staff. In the meantime I had managed to collect some facts about the neighbouring tribes which were of great importance for the coming journeys. I first turned north towards the Kĕnta-Kĕnsiu, of whom I had so far not seen a single individual. The parting from my Jahai friends was not a matter of indifference to me. Moreover, I was faced with the prospect of adapting myself to fresh surroundings and learning a new language. My next goal was Sĕlama, a Malay centre, known to be a resort of the negritos. Various explorers had visited these Sĕlama dwarfs, who are easily accessible, including Rudolf Martin, Vaughan Stevens, and many others both before and after them. Sĕlama is easy to get to, and is a Malay stronghold, which explains why the negritos there have been more frequently visited by white men. I made the journey from Taiping to Sĕlama in a car. Unfortunately, a disappointment was in store for me at the very outset : the Semang had moved further inland. I was able to find a few half-breed Sakai among the Malays and Chinese, but that was all.

The Semang had gone to Kedah, and various places were mentioned to me where they might be found. To save time, I again made the long journey in the car. The districts of Kedah present a different picture from the thick forest I had lived in in the heart of Perak and Kĕlantan. The forest has been invaded and cleared a great deal by Malay settlements, great rubber plantations stretch in many places, and vast

rice fields afford the eye a view of distant mountain masses, with the blue sea far beyond. Through kampongs, rice fields, and rubber plantations, up hill and down dale, our car sped along the splendid Kedah road to Baling, an ideally situated place hemmed in by massive mountains.

Once more the time came to try my luck and attempt to establish friendly relations with the Semang. As this district was entirely unknown to me, I was compelled in the first place to make friends with the Malays.

Before long I had obtained information about two camps, and on the very day of my arrival a Malay offered to lead me to the camp on the Siong river. The name "Siong," which was already known to me from literature dealing with the Semang, electrified me. The same day I went on to the Siong kampong, and accompanied by the Malay guide and my faithful Lebai I marched up the Siong river to the Semang camp. One kampong led to another. Between rice fields and cocoa palms, past the bamboo huts of the inhabitants, herds of cattle and buffalo, through morass and river, we hurried on, for it was already afternoon, towards the forest.

I was able to view two camps. In one a crowd of starving children and a few old women gazed at me greedily as I distributed tobacco among the few men. All had their turn, including the women and children. As the camp lay close to the road—the inhabitants could be heard talking from the road—it was not difficult to reach them. A young man acted as guide to the neighbouring camp, which lay not far away at the edge of a small clearing. This made a better impression, and I felt I should like to take up my abode here if no better opportunity occurred. The people of both camps called themselves Meni-Kĕnsiu. What surprised me most was their language, for they spoke Jahai with me, whereas from what I had heard in Perak I was expecting another idiom. I did not understand why this was so, but it was explained later when I found that there were among the Kĕnsiu some Jahai who had married Kĕnsiu women.

Although this unexpectedly quick and easy opening of relationship with quite a new tribe of course pleased me very much, I still had some doubts as to whether I should settle among them; they lived so close to the Malays that they would be strongly influenced by Malay civilization. It was true that I had as yet no definite evidence of this; on the contrary, they gave the impression outwardly of being genuine negritos, and were more worthy of the name "dwarfs" than the Jahai. If the Jahai express their more robust and more compact figures by the hard-sounding word "Menra" (Man), the soft word "Meni" (Man) fits excellently the more delicate and slighter Kěnsiu. Their bodies, personality, and instincts were as soft as the word. Later, I was to learn to know well enough the character of the Kěnsiu and their neighbours the Kěnta. I may almost call them the civilized Semang; not because they had been influenced by European civilization, but because in their outlook, their songs, and their stories a peculiarly delicate charm and bright nature revealed itself. Where these tribes have come by these characteristics I do not know. In much they differ from the Jahai, but in their mode of life they are in every way similar. They hurry through the forests, hunting small game with the blow-pipe, while their women, using the same digging stick we know from the Jahai, grub up forest roots. Their homes are the same shelters, their household equipment made from the same bamboos. It is possible that it is the closer touch with the Malays and their life in the open forest which have made them softer than their cousins in the dark forests of the Pěrgau and Perak. This greater gentleness is apparent in their softer speech and more delicate build.

One moonlight night when I was returning slowly along the Baling road, after my first visit to the Kěnsiu—we could not raise a car—I pondered over what I should do. I first wanted to discover other camps and find out more about the inhabitants of this district before settling down in any way.

At noon the following day I was in Kupang, a Malay kampong situated about eleven kilometres west of Baling. My servant had gone on ahead to send some one out to the Semang camp I had been told about, and bring up the people. I had given him strict instructions to say nothing about a meeting with a white man. I had not long to wait before an old Malay woman appeared with a small band of curly-heads.

I received my strange friends, who looked up at me very shrewdly, in a Chinese booth close by. I was not the first European they had met, as I soon realized. As they had no objection to my visiting their camp, I immediately set out for it. The way led through kampongs and rice fields, always up the Kupang river, until at last we turned westward and entered the forest. Here, on the forest edge, their camp was built, close to a Malay kampong. It consisted of three rickety shelters accommodating three families.

The people called themselves KĚnta-Bogn, and their territory stretched from Sĕlama to Baling. Years before they had been a very numerous tribe, but now they had shrunk to sixty-one persons. The last epidemic (pneumonia) had carried off a large number of them (one hundred and seventy was the number mentioned) so quickly that the Malays of Sĕlama had had to help them bury the dead. This I was told by Hempĕlabn, who was the most communicative of my companions. Although there were only fourteen people in the camp, I at once decided to make a stay here. The two men who had accompanied me impressed me favourably. Moreover, they promised to speak of me to their companions in the neighbourhood and persuade them to come and join them. I therefore arranged with them that they should build me quarters in their midst. A new Malay hut close by was very tempting, but it was important that I should be in a position to study closely the Semang mode of life and I could not do this without living among them by day and night.

The following morning I was pacing up and down the road near the Kupong river, waiting impatiently for the arrival

of the curly-heads who had promised to take the baggage to the camp. This lay ready tied up in bundles by the roadside. Lebai was ransacking the Chinese shops to buy what was necessary for a prolonged stay. Hour after hour passed, and still the bearers I was expecting did not appear. I began to suspect that the little people might have fled, and to make sure I set off alone, leaving the servant by the luggage.

Without a guide I kept losing my way on the many paths through the rice fields, and it was late when I arrived, by a roundabout route, at the camp, where I burst out of the bush like a wild animal. This so frightened the few women who with a man were busy erecting my hut, that they seized their children and sought safety in hurried flight. The bearers had actually set out, but soon returned on learning from Malays that the white man had already reached their camp by another route. I had to urge them to set out again as quickly as possible to fetch my baggage, and myself took a hand in the preparation of my new quarters. By this time the frightened women had reappeared, dragging in bundles of rattan leaves to make the roof. In the evening I was installed with my baggage. Lebai had even fixed up a kitchen. Though, up to now, he had always cooked in the open, he thought that this time it would be a good thing to have a shelter for the fire, for we were in the middle of the rainy season.

The encampment lay in the shade of the trees, but on the edge of the forest. Twenty yards away I could regale myself in the most splendid sunshine on a stretch of grass only slightly overgrown with shrub. I can hardly describe how gratifying these daily walks in the sun were to me. The mouldy smell of decay, the wet and chill of the forest, the ground churned up into soft mud by the prolonged rain, literally drove me out of the forest gloom.

At first these daily walks caused the dwarfs a good deal of misgiving. I generally walked about deep in thought, up and down the same path, without looking about me. It was never long before a number of curly-heads, watching me closely,



THE WOMEN EMERGED SHYLY FROM THE  
UNDERGROWTH (p. 249)



JLEH THE PHILOSOPHER (RIGHT) (p. 250)



TIMUN SCATTERING THE BLOOD (p. 252)



TIMUN CUTTING HIS LEG FOR THE BLOOD SACRIFICE  
(p. 252)



would peer shyly through the foliage. My behaviour struck them as most strange. What was the white man in the helmet doing? They turned for an explanation to Lebai, who used to be on his back under the shelter pushing his quid of tobacco from one corner of his mouth to the other and gazing into the tree-tops. Lebai's whole bearing and everything he said had something soothing about it. This time he was particularly successful in calming the excited people. "He is praying," he answered. After that, every time I returned to the camp after my walk in the sunlight, the little fellows would look at me with wide, shining eyes. They knew now that I had been speaking with "Kaei" (Karei in the Jahai language), and that I must therefore be a quite respectable person of whom they had no need to be afraid.

Not far from the camp flowed a stream to which I hurried every day to bathe. The water leeches, which were very numerous because the water buffaloes of the Malays also went into the water here, caused me some anxiety.

The position of the settlement had the great advantage that I could obtain all my food supplies at any time from the Chinese shop close at hand, and in the rainy season this was certainly a great boon. The Semang here lived almost exclusively on rice which they bought or borrowed from the Malays in one way and another. I do not remember once seeing the women go out to look for food during my stay; but I was told that under ordinary conditions they ate more roots. While I was among them they had no need to, as I had to supply them with part of their rice to induce them to remain.

The next day there was great bustle in the camp. New shelters were erected and the camp enlarged. By means which were not clear to me, the companions in the neighbourhood had been communicated with and had all hurried over to live with me. Of course they were only thinking of my daily distribution of rice. The camp was increased to thirty-one persons.

My sponsors in this camp were chiefly: Hempělabn, Hitam, and the crippled old Juke, who was related to almost all the inhabitants and was regarded as a sort of chief who had to settle disputes, and if necessary admonish. His legs were so crippled as the result of some disease that he could only move with the help of a long stick. Most of the time he lay motionless in his hut, taking no particular notice of me; but if I asked him or anyone else for information, it poured from his mouth like a torrent.

Hempělabn and Hitam were the ones with whom I had most to do. The two would be about the same age, about forty. Hempělabn was a true Semang type, with bushy eyebrows and a protruding mouth. There was something of a sullen look about his eyes, but he often burst into prolonged laughter. When he was out of temper—which was not seldom—he looked like a lowering thunder cloud.

He was very energetic, quick, and extraordinarily shrewd, though his cleverness was not of the type I had observed in Kěładi from the Těladn; it was more crafty and calculating. Hempělabn had been more in contact with Malays and had more of the shrewdness of the children of this world. He had already on several occasions had to do with white men, who must have flattered his vanity, and he thought he would be able to exploit me. At the very beginning he approached me to ask what I would pay him to place himself at my disposal. As I did not know what to answer, not being accustomed to receive advances from an Orang-Utan, he added that they would all go away if I refused.

“As far as I’m concerned, I don’t wish to keep anyone,” I replied hotly. “There are plenty of other Orang-Utan.” He had not expected this answer, which reduced him to silence, and he never again spoke to me in the same way.

The better I came to know this sullen dwarf, the less reason I found to dislike him. He was certainly not a bad character, but he was vain, dogmatic, and overbearing. This repeatedly brought him into conflict with the other members of the camp,

and he often had to listen to abuse. When this happened he did not defend himself but relapsed into wounded silence, though it could be seen that he was choking down his fury. He did not, however, seem to bear resentment. He refused to allow his views to be corrected by his fellows, and old Juke often had to intervene to bring him to order. He was firmly convinced of his own knowledge. Actually, he did know a great deal about the customs and outlook of the KĚnta, and when I expressed my admiration of this, he told me how, in his youth, he had lived with a relative who had initiated him into the mysteries of the *halas*. But this man died before his training was complete, so that he had not gone on with it. This was how his knowledge had been acquired.

To questions of secondary importance he would often reply : "I don't know that," but when the matter came to be discussed at greater length, it would become apparent that Hempĕlabn knew it very well. This attitude was so striking that Lebai could not help laughing whenever he replied "I don't know." He knew well enough, but seemed for a moment not to remember. This occurred several times in succession when I was inquiring about medicines for various diseases. As a matter of fact, it was through him that I was able to compile a small catalogue of Semang medicines for all kinds of diseases.

Hempĕlabn had a little daughter, and a son under two years of age called Bakes, to whom he was extraordinarily devoted. As the little fellow was constantly ailing, the father took a great deal of trouble to concoct all kinds of medicines and small delicacies for him.

Hempĕlabn's wife was terribly lazy and irresponsible. I have never seen such a shrewish woman among the Semang. She was an unusually broad, coarse figure, covered all over with skin eruptions. Her chief occupation consisted in sitting before the fire hunting for lice under her skin, or scratching herself, and smoking tobacco. She was always the last to get up in the morning and she took very little notice of her

children. If Bakes cried in the night with trouble, she did not stir a hand and the father had to get up and take him into the forest.

Once when the woman took no notice of the father's darling who was sitting whimpering on the bamboo bed, the man flew into a rage and abused his wife. Strangely enough she made no reply, but took the child and went off with him into the forest. Hempelabn, however, went on scolding the whole day.

I too was disgusted at this woman's callous behaviour towards her children, especially her stepchild. It also surprised me very much, for I was accustomed to seeing the mothers treat their children with great tenderness.

Next to my hut, on the right, was the shelter of a widower whose wife had died in childbirth, leaving a child of two. I was sorry for the man ; he had to look after the two children single-handed. The grandmother had taken over the baby and the little creature was passed round among the women of the camp to be fed at the breast.

The other child the father looked after and fed himself. It was ill, and some nasty wounds on its legs and feet kept it awake. The man told me his tale of woe. The child's cries constantly broke the silence of the forest night. "*Ay ! Ay !*" (Father ! Father !) he would cry, louder and louder. What could the man do ? He would take the child in his arms and try to quieten it as well as a man can. This was effective for a moment and then the crying would begin again. In his pain the child would remember his grandmother and whine out : "*Ya ! Ya !*" (Grandmother ! Grandmother !). Quietly, and without an angry word, the father would get up and carry it over to the old woman's hut.

What appealed to me was the patience and loving care shown by the father. He never tried to frighten the child into silence with a harsh word. In the forest he would carry it about on his back and every day he took it to the water to wash its wounds.

While half-grown children, from about five years onwards, sleep apart from their parents on a bed of their own, a small child will sleep with its parents on their bed. It generally lies between the two, or beside the flickering fire which keeps it warm.

Up to the age of three or four, the children run about naked, but I often saw little urchins putting a piece of cloth round them of their own accord, though they did not always succeed in covering the parts for which the cloths were meant.

The children's eyes were bright and intelligent. Many a traveller in the forests of Malaya has told of the furtive glance of these dwarfs. I cannot support this view, for their eyes only look like this when they feel mistrust.

I frequently played with the children in this camp; they were not so timid as Jahai children. We teased one another, pushed one another about, and slapped one another's hands.

"*Mu mĕni běltek*" (You're a black fellow), I said to a little curly-head who was looking at me more impudently than usual. "*Mu mĕni pĕltau*" (You're a white fellow), was the prompt reply. Then, with a flash of his dark eyes: "*Mu běltek, ie pĕltau!*" (You're black, I'm white!) the little fellow cried, stamping with his foot and stressing his words as European children do. Then we argued as to which of us was white and which black. To prove his contention he would hold the palm of his hand, which was as white as mine. Each time he held it out I slapped it with mine. He returned my slaps so hard that he stung his hand. I could see that he had hurt himself; but he would not give up the game and I for my part wanted to see what the little Orang-Utan would do. Would he cry? There was no trace of tears. In his left hand he had a piece of wood. This he quickly changed to his right, and hit at the hand I was holding out. He missed. His eyes were blazing. What was he to do now? His little fingers darted at my arm to pinch it. Again he failed. At last, with a final: "*Mu běltek, ie pĕltau!*" (You're black, I'm white!) he ran away. A child's revenge!

Then another, even smaller than the first, came dashing up. Pushing his head forward, like a maddened bull, he shouted: "*Ie tumbo mu!*" (I'll punch you!) "Punch away," I said, and he clenched his fists and thrust them out like a boxer, shouting: "*Ie tumbo mu!*" The grown-ups burst into roars of laughter, whereupon the whole troop of children came storming up with the cry: "*Ie tumbo mu!*"

One sad fact I have already mentioned in connection with the Jahai obtruded itself upon my notice also among the Kěnta. Here, too, orphan children were harshly treated by their stepmothers. Hempělabn's wife was extraordinarily callous. Hempělabn had under his protection a very intelligent little orphan girl of about six, who slept under his shelter, but right at the edge, where the rain dripped down upon her. The child took little notice of this, but the constant heartless scolding of the stepmother repeatedly brought the tears to her eyes. She was always being driven out to fetch water and wood, but at meal times she sat apart from the rest of the family as though she had been a complete stranger. I watched in silence how the ceaseless scolding of the stepmother was beginning to arouse defiance and contrariness in the little girl. I was forced to the conclusion that the child could not endure such treatment for long and that from the moment she was in anything like a position to look after herself, she would never give another look to the hideous woman. This woman's behaviour had such an effect on her own children that even they, when they had a chance, would show their dislike of their stepsister.

In this camp I also noticed that the children of the Orang-Utan can fight among themselves like other children. During the first few days of my stay, my attention was attracted by loud crying. Hempělabn's five-year-old daughter, with her bowl of rice on her knees, was crying, and also the orphan who was sitting opposite her, smeared all over with rice, which the younger girl had obviously thrown in her face. The louder the stepmother scolded, the louder the little orphan cried,

and the faster the daughter's tears flowed. At last I put an end to this unpleasant scene by calling to the woman to be quiet. This was effective.

One day I entered in my notebook: "Up to now I have never seen children playing in an open, sunny part of the forest, although the grass at the forest edge looks so attractive for play." The very next day I found I was mistaken. The sunny evening tempted them out of the darkness and they played about to their heart's content, until the sound of an approaching thunderstorm drove them back under the trees.

One personality of the camp who stood out from the others, and to whom I owed a great deal of information that was new to me, was Hitam. He was the *bala* of the camp, of course of a minor kind. Hempĕlabn did not treat him with the respect due to his office, but always had the worst of it when Hitam insisted on his own opinion and put him in his place. Hitam and Hempĕlabn were opium-smokers. This vice had been introduced among the Kĕnta also by the Chinese. Hitam was already so seriously addicted to it that he could no longer give it up, even with the best will in the world. Several other Semang men of this group smoked opium, but only occasionally. When Hitam and Hempĕlabn found it impossible to procure any opium, they smoked *kentobn* leaves, which are said to have a similar effect. The leaves are burned to ashes, and the ashes are crushed and then chewed. Sometimes they are eaten green.

Hitam was a good-natured fellow, but weak of will; you could do what you liked with him. He was ready for anything, but at the same time seemed unsteady and superficial. These failings I rightly set down to the use of opium.

According to his own account he was already married for the seventh time. Some of his wives had died, some had run away. Hitam himself was in the prime of life. The woman with whom he had lived last was really only a girl. She, too, was taken away from him in the end, because he could not raise the price of her purchase. He even suggested to me that

I should pay off this debt of his which had been hanging over him so long. I refused, because I had good reason to suspect that any money he had would find its way to the opium dealers.

Hitam was very sprightly in conversation, and had plenty to say. I owe to him especially my initiation into the mysteries of the *pano*.

The Kěnta had inherited a tradition that they had come into the interior from the west, or at least I often heard this said. Their earlier district was said to be the mountain Jerei, whence they spread to Sělama, Baling, and Siong, for the Kěnsiu people also, who to-day live in Siong, formerly lived on the Gunong Jerei. Although there is to-day no link of friendship between the Kěnsiu and the Kěnta, I was informed positively that they had once formed a single tribe. This view is supported by the fact that both tribes speak the same language. Formerly there had been no association with the Sabubn and Jahei who are to-day their neighbours; it was even said that they had once fought with these tribes.

In this connection I was told the following legend. The two largest species of ape which are to-day found in Malaya, the *siamang* and the *mawas*, were once men, and fought one another on the Ulu Pe near Grik. The *mawas* drove the *amang* to the further bank of the Perak, so that to-day no *amang* apes are to be found on this side of the Perak. That these two species of ape represent two human tribes at least suggests itself. Just as the thunder-god, Karei, repeatedly appeared in the form of the *siamang* (*amang*) ape, so the dark *amang* surely represents negritos who were driven into the interior by a fairer race. Another animal fable replaces the *mawas* by the *běrok*, or cocoanut monkey.

In the beginning the men, who all had the appearance of Malays, lived on the Gunong Běrapı (the Rice Mountain) near the coast. From the land of Benua, *i.e.* Siam, came the *raja běrok*, who waged war on the *siamang* ape. Before the fire kindled by the *raja běrok* the *siamang* ape and all the men with



him fled inland to Ulu Perak. I was also told how the *běrok* came upon fire. His wife was in the throes of childbirth and the *běrok*, wanting to give her a cocoanut, took a nut and split it open ; fire leapt out of it. With this he ignited *lalang* grass and all fled before the conflagration, part of them towards the mountainous interior. The hair of these was singed by the flames and has remained curly down to the present day ; these are the Semang. The others, who fled downstream, became the present Malays.

The forebears of the KĚnta, and also of the KĚnsiu, are called Ta Piago and Ya Tangoi or Kapij. Ta Piago at one time used the bow. But when all the Semang fled before the fire lit by the *běrok* ape, the Jahai took the bow with them so that the others should not use it.

Ta Piago once lived in a hut. After his death the place became a mountain cleft by great ravines. This mountain is pointed out in the neighbourhood of Baling. The Batu Ribn, according to the KĚnta, had a similar origin. Ta Piago and Ya Kapij, so the legend runs, once went hunting tortoises. They came near the place where the Batu Ribn now stands, and there they built a *pano* hut. After the *chenoi* had gone to heaven, the *pano* hut became a mountain, the Batu Ribn.

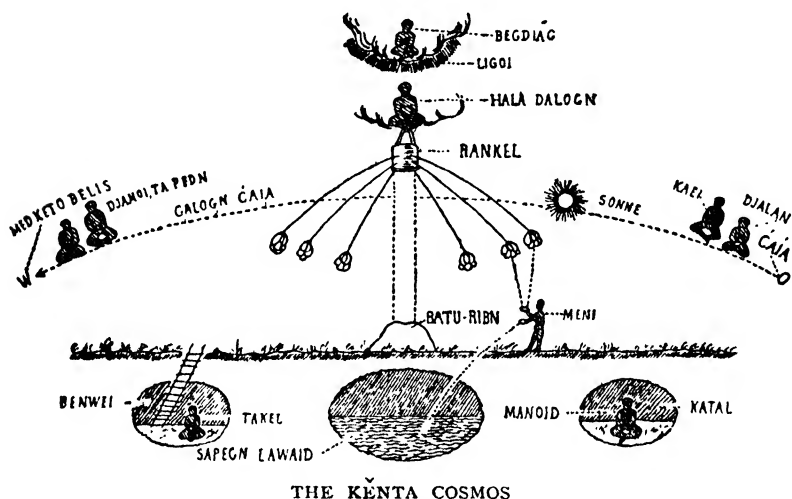
Although the Batu Ribn is situated in the territory of the Jahai and has never yet been seen by a KĚnta, it is regarded as their sacred place, the centre of the earth. From the Batu Ribn, on the Pĕrgau river, a tree once grew which reached to the sky. On top of this tree Kaei and his younger brother Ta Pedn placed the *rankel*, a kind of turning wheel. From this wheel hang six lianas, reaching down in different directions to the earth. From the ends of these lianas hang great domes of fruit and flowers.

The turn-table with the lianas revolves throughout the year. Each time one of the domes of fruit overhangs the country of the Semang it is harvest time. Thus does Kaei provide for men.

Over the *rankel* dwells Begjag, a younger brother of Kaei ;

he is the ruler of Ligoï, the place of the winds. Below the *rankel* a beam or bridge, called *galogn*, stretches through the firmament from east to west, and upon this the sun pursues its course. This is also the dwelling-place of Kaei and Ta Pedn. Kaei sits at the eastern end on a mat, with his wife Jalam beside him. Ta Pedn lives on the western end, also sitting on a mat, his wife Jamoi beside him.

Strangely enough, Ta Pedn enjoys the particular reverence and love of the *chenoi*, by whom he is called *Tata Ta Pedn*,



which means something like "Grandpa Pedn." This title is not applied to Kaei. My question whether in that case Ta Pedn was not greater than Kaei was answered in the negative. In explanation they compared me with Kaei and my servant with Pedn. Just as the people did not turn directly to me when they had a request to make, but went first to my servant, so the *chenoi* go first to Ta Pedn. Kaei is he who commands. The tree-trunk on which the *rankel* was fixed is now no longer to be seen. In the earth under the Batu Ribn lies a place named Telaidn Sapegn. Here is collected all the blood that is scattered on the ground for Manoid at the blood sacrifice. For this reason the Batu Ribn is also called the Batu Telaidn, rock of sin or expiation. But

the blood which is thrown to heaven during the sacrifice goes into the fruit domes of the *rankel* to make beautiful red fruits. The more blood is offered, the richer is the fruit harvest.

A second place lies under the ground to the east, where Manoid lives, the grandmother of the three male heavenly dwellers, Kaei, Ta Pedn, and Begjag.

In the third place, in the west, below Ta Pedn, sits Takel, the grandmother of the three heavenly women, Jalan, Jamoi and Chemioi (Chemioi is the wife of Begjag). The heavenly ladder by which the *hala* mounts leads up from here.

Up to this point the Kĕnta cosmos is clear and easy to follow, but here it becomes involved as various legends and myths are added to it.

I once noted down the following list of relationships between the dwellers in heaven: Kaei and Ta Pedn are a pair of brothers whose parents are Tinjeg and Manoid. Their wives are the sisters Jalan and Jamoi, whose parents are Taseg and Tangoi.

I was told that Tinjeg is the lord of iron. He eats the earth, which then turns to water. If *tabobn*, the dung-beetle, did not stop him, he would make an end of the whole earth.

But Tangoi is also said to be the wife of Ta Piago, the first *hala* and first ancestor of the Kĕnta.

One myth tells of Jalan and Jamoi and their elevation to the rank of heavenly women, as follows:

Jalan, Jamoi, and the boy Kĕlang are children of Agag, the crow. Agag was busy in the fields, while her two daughters were rocking the youngest child in the house. Then Kaei and Begjag came that way and caused the hut, together with those within, to rise aloft. This was their way of seizing the two women. When the mother looked up, and saw the hut already high in the air, she called out in her anguish: "*Ag'ag! Ag'ag!*" and in this way became a crow. Kaei ordered the two girls to kill the youngest child. When they refused,

Kaei himself threw it out. It became a bird and its voice became that of the *kělang* (fish-eagle).

According to my informant, Agag and her children were Malays, whereas Kaei and Begjag are Semang.

This myth contains several features that indicate foreign origin. Field-cultivation, huts, and the rocking of children are unknown to the Semang, and all these things play an important rôle in the myth. It is moreover striking that Ta Pedn is not mentioned in this myth, Begjag taking his place. This seems to show that Kaei and Ta Pedn did not originally belong together.

Kaei, according to the Kěnta view, is fair in colour and covered with white hair. He is clothed in the *penjo dog*, the loin-cloth of *ipoh* bark. Kaei and the dwellers in the skies do not eat in human fashion, but pick the fruits of the heavenly tree and suck them.

The Kěnta have strange things to tell concerning the creation of the world. In the beginning was the water. Kaei sat above in the firmament. Beside him was the sun. Out of the water the *tahobn* (dung-beetle) brought a tiny ball of earth. This grew higher and higher and the whole earth would have become a mountain had not the bear appeared, who trampled the mountain down and made the level land. Kaei from above saw how it was with the earth. He came down and remained some time upon it. During this time he created man and the *rankel*, and then reascended to heaven.

Later, I heard another version, according to which, now that the tree-trunk on which the *rankel* rested is missing, the *rankel* is held by a certain *hala*, Dalogn. Should he let it fall, not only all men, but also the heavenly dwellers would be crushed. For this reason Kaei is afraid of Dalogn. Others, again, say that Dalogn holds the sun and makes it revolve.

Even if Kaei did not create the earth and all that grows and blooms upon it, he certainly did create men and animals. The following remarkable legend was told to me: The grand-

mother, Manoid (who is also, as we have seen, the grandmother of Kaei), asked him for a child. They went together into the forest. Kaei made a human figure out of clay, wrapped it in a mat, and let it lie overnight. The following morning it had become a girl. Kaei and Manoid made another clay figure and again wrapped it in a mat, and on the following morning it was a little boy. After this boy had grown to be a man, he took the girl as his wife. When the two went into the forest, they found a flower, and in the flower was a stone. They took the stone, which turned into a child in their hands. The child grew up and became a woman. This woman now went out into the forest and came upon a stalk. She plucked it; it became a stone and the stone became a boy. When this boy had grown up, the two became man and wife and had children. These were the first human pair.

Although in this legend it is definitely stated that Kaei and Manoid were not the parents of the first man and woman, but created them, the KĚnta nevertheless call themselves the grandchildren of Kaei.

We shall hear more exactly how Kaei created the beasts when we come to the KĚnsiu; from the KĚnta I was never able to obtain any information on this point.

Kaei, who sits up above on the *galogn*, beside the sun, seems to be connected with the moon; at any rate this is indicated by the animals which are sacred to Kaei: the cat (!), the *pacheg* (Malay, *pĕlandok*), a small gazelle, the little owl (*wog*: Malay, *burong pungoh*), and the pheasant (*kawogn*: Malay, *burong kuwong*). Both the pheasant and the little owl cry during the night when the moon is full. It is remarkable that the KĚnta should regard the moon as a cat.

Kaei is the thunder, and at the same time the thunder-god, just as he is among the Jahai. When Kaei thunders, he is angry; some one has assuredly transgressed one of his commandments, and in his wrath he demands atonement. As with all the other Semang tribes, expiation takes the form of the blood sacrifice.

During this ceremony I heard the following prayer: "Thou, Grandmother Manoid, mount up to heaven and tell thy grandchildren, Kaei and Ta Pedn, that I am atoning for my sin!" And then, addressing Kaei: "Oh, here I pay for my guilt!"

Another striking formula runs: "O thou, Grandmother Kalchegn, Grandmother Manoid, rise up and bring to the ears of thy grandchildren, Chapogn, Chalog, Chigjog, and to the ears of Ta Pedn, that he send back the thunder to the mouth of the waters!"

The strange thing about this last formula is that here Manoid appears also under her second name, by which she is called in the language of the *chenoi*, and that Ta Pedn, and not Kaei, is appealed to as lord and commander of the thunder. This point, and the anomalies already mentioned several times with regard to the position of Ta Pedn, show him in a new light. On this point, too, the Kěnsiu will enlighten us fully.

For the manner in which the rolling of the thunder is produced, the Kěnta have an explanation of their own. Near Kaei lies the dragon Tanyogn. He is set by Kaei to see that his laws are obeyed. Whenever Tanyogn hears that a man has committed a sin, he roars so terribly that the sound re-echoes in all directions. That is the thunder. From the *Kubagn Lawaid* (the place I have already mentioned as Sapegn) he spurts water into the air. This is the lightning.

A transgression of one of Kaei's laws is called *telaidn*. This word is frequently heard, especially when children are being scolded; just as we should say: "That is a sin, you mustn't do it." The result of a *telaidn* is called *dos* (Malay, *dusa*), "guilt."

There is a large number of *telaidn* which the sinner must expiate with his own blood. For example:

- (1) Adultery;
- (2) The killing of certain animals, sacred to Kaei, as, for instance, the dwarf antelope (*tragulus rarus*), and the *kasa* bird (*polychimas cinereus*). Moreover, when this bird utters

its cry, no word must be spoken. Also the *tanyogn*, the species of wasp we have already come across, and the *sagwogn* bird (*anthacoceros*: Malay, *malayanus*). Its cry, too, imposes silence;

(3) To mock, or laugh at the following animals: the leech, the snake *ular talong*, butterflies, and various species of ape;

(4) It is forbidden to watch dogs mating;

(5) It is forbidden to draw water in any pot or vessel that has been blackened by fire. If this has been done some of the blood from the sacrifice must be poured into the water;

(6) The women may not wear any comb in their hair during a thunderstorm, nor for seven days after the death of one of the inhabitants of the camp;

(7) Sexual intercourse by day in the camp is a grave sin (*telaidn tebow*);

(8) Birds' eggs must not be played with.

Other crimes, again, cannot be expiated with the blood sacrifice. Kaei punishes them in another way. If parents-in-law associate in any way with their children-in-law of the other sex, if they so much as speak with one another or come near one another, even involuntarily, the *sagwogn* bird is at once seen in the neighbourhood of the camp. Forthwith a medicine is prepared to counteract *chemam*, a kind of disease in the back which follows upon the sin.

It is a sin for the parents to sleep with their older children of different sex. Further, the bull-roarer must not be swung in the forest because it attracts the tiger.

Furthermore, the Kĕnta, like the Jahai, fear the destruction of the world should a sinner refuse to make atonement.

These details about the spiritual side of the Kĕnta and their cult were of great importance for my investigations, and no less so was the information I gleaned with regard to the *pano* ceremony. I had already seen a *pano* hut in Puchok's camp; here I was to hear the singing which takes place in it.

As soon as I had learned something about the *chenoi* and the *pano* hut within which these dwellers in heaven com-

municate with men, approach them, sing with them, and help them, especially in case of disease, I at once asked the *hala*, Hitam, to allow me to witness a *pano* ceremony. He consented at once, all the more willingly since his assistant (*serlantes*) happened to be visiting the camp. At once he gave instructions to the women and children to build the *pano* hut and fetch flowers and green stuff.

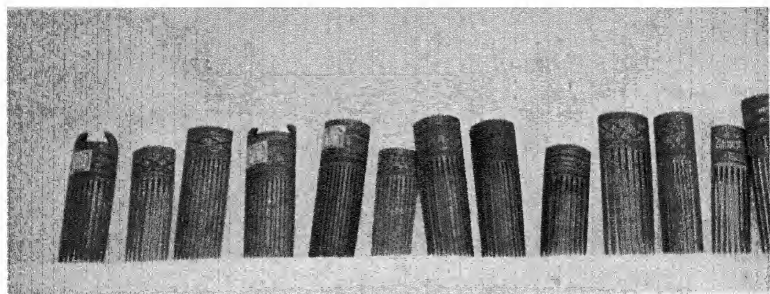
A woman carried through the building of the *pano* hut. The long leaves of the *bertam* palm, resembling those of the cocoa palm, which had been brought in—I counted eleven—were stuck into the ground in a circle. At a height which the woman could only just reach, she drew a liana round the leaves and tied them together, giving the hut the form of a tall sugar loaf. From within, she lined the hut with leaves of the same kind, their points towards the ground. The single leaves were skilfully plaited together, so that it was impossible to see into the interior. By the floor a small opening was left through which a man could just force his way.

The *hala* and his *serlantes*, with wreaths of flowers round their brows, wriggled into the hut. Meanwhile the women and children were decorating themselves. They fixed into their hair with combs scented grasses, which hung down a long way at the back of their heads, placed head-bands of rattan fibre (*akar pinerok*) and wreaths of flowers round their foreheads, and stuck foliage into their girdles. I was told that the *chenoi*, in whose honour the *pano* ceremony is performed, like these ornaments.

The voices of the *hala* and his assistant were now heard from within. He sang in a strange key, rather as small children sing. Women and children hurried up and squatted in a semicircle round the *pano* hut, and while the two inside the hut sang, the women repeated the rhyme. A solemn silence reigned. There was not a breath of breeze. The men by the camp fires were hushed, as the two began their song and the women and children broke in with their high-pitched voices. I have never seen negro eyes shine so brightly as did







ORNAMENTED BAMBOO COMBS (p. 260)



PANTALUNG SEMANG (p. 265)  
(Photo by Prince Damrong)

those of these children singing to the little *chenoi*, their flower friends. Each new song was marked with a new melody, all simple but very moving. I can hardly tell how deeply the words and melody of the following song impressed me.

*A o wa, sejon batu,  
Letud penyogn, sejon batu,  
Keda(ha)Pele, sejon batu,  
Letud penyogn, sejon batu,  
Keda(ha)chenoi, sejon batu,  
Penyusor batu, sejon batu,  
Pankan gimal, sejon batu,  
Pankan lonyau, sejon batu,  
Kantal gimal, sejon batu.*

The following is a free translation :

*A o wa !* We glide down from the rock,  
To the strains of the flute. we glide down from the rock,  
We maidens of Ple, we glide down from the rock ;  
To the strains of the flute, we glide down from the rock ;  
We, the *chenoi* maidens, glide down from the rock,  
Glide down the rocky wall, glide down from the rock,  
We swing the mats to and fro, we glide down from the rock,  
We hurl the lightning, we glide down from the rock ;  
Seize the mats, we glide down from the rock.

This is the song sung by the *chenoi* women as, leaving the flowers, they rise to heaven with flute playing and clapping of hands. It is the belief of the Kĕnta and Semang that the *chenoi*, little, friendly, heavenly creatures, live in the flowers. When, in the morning, the sun rises on high and its warming rays open the flowers, they emerge. Their heads wreathed in flowers, garlands of flowers round their waists, the zigzag lines of lightning striping their faces, they rise, jubilant, clapping their hands, to Kaei to serve him, or go among mortals to play with them.

All flowers are their abode, but more particularly the flower domes of the *rankel*. To appreciate the full poetry of this faith, it is necessary to plunge deep into the psychology of the dwarfs. This faith gives rise to animated intercourse

between the people and these elves. In honour of the *chenoi* the people like to crown themselves with flowers, especially when about to sing or play. I have often heard them humming the many *chenoi* songs the whole day long. During the ceremony the exaltation of the little band swept me away. The *chenoi* song rang in my ears like a song of the *Primitiæ creationis*, a song of the firstfruits of creation singing for joy as, in the sun's first rays, they are wakened by God's quickening love. There is no note of pain or sorrow in any of the *chenoi* songs ; all are joyous and happy, all breathe the innocence of Paradise and its joys. It was like the music of lost Paradise.

There are male and female *chenoi*, and both appear in the *pano* hut. Almost as soon as the *bala* has begun to sing they descend into the hut as though they had been waiting for his call. There is a rustling in the leaves ; that is the *chenoi* coming down to unite with the *bala*. It is they who are singing inside, no longer the *bala* and his *serlantes*, for these have become *chenoi* ; wherefore they speak and sing in the high-pitched voices of the *chenoi* ; and they speak, moreover, a foreign language, the language of the *chenoi*, which is not spoken in ordinary life and which the ordinary people do not understand, or only very little. The *bala* told me that, outside the *pano*, he himself only knew it very imperfectly, which was true. Nevertheless, I succeeded in transcribing some of it.

A very strange apparition of the *pano* is the so-called *bidog*, a *chenoi* who appears as a limping old man—whence the name *bidog* (Old Man). Actually this is the tiger which lives in certain places far from the dwellings of men, *e.g.* near the Batu Ribn. He is harmless and does not hurt members of the tribe. When this tiger-*chenoi* enters the *pano* hut, he changes himself into the *bidog*, the Old Man. The moment he has entered, the *bala* begins to sing in the deep-pitched voice of an old man.

*Lanka bidog, kow, hnu kow ;*  
*Beredeled, kow hnu kow ;*

*Tentegn lapis, kow hnu kow ;  
Lankab bitul, kow hnu kow ;  
Alor sejinga, kow hnu kow ;  
Belawen, kow hnu kow ;  
Belanya kow hnu kow ;  
Lawen belanya, kow hnu kow ;  
Alor Temegn, kow hnu kow ;  
Alor Tadob, kow hnu kow ;  
Lel, lel, lel, kow hnu kow.*

*With great strides the bidog, he enters the hut ;  
His eyes flash, he enters the hut  
His hips shine, he enters the hut ;  
Mightily he strides, he enters the hut ;  
There on the bank of the Sengoh, he enters the hut ;  
And on the bank of the Belawen, he enters the hut ;  
And of the Belanya river, he enters the hut ;  
They fight in pairs, he enters the hut ;  
(Two tigers have met)  
On the bank of the river Temegn, he enters the hut ;  
On the bank of the river Tadob, he enters the hut ;  
In a circle the bidog turns, he enters the hut.*

It is not at all easy to understand the *bidog* figure. In so far as the Semang understands it at all, it is confused with the image of the were-tiger, which represents our were-wolf among the Malays. It is said that a man, more especially a *hala*, can assume the form of a tiger and prowl about the forest, lying in wait for man.

According to the Semang belief the *hala* can certainly become a tiger, and after his death he often does. But this tiger has nothing to do with the ordinary tiger. The *hala*-tiger is no other than the *bidog*, and is a son of Karei. Moreover, every *hala* is a son of Karei and can therefore assume the form of a tiger, as he can assume the form of any other *chenoi*. For this reason the *hala* in the *pano* hut sings in the high- or low-pitched voice of the *chenoi* he represents. That the *hala*-tiger becomes the *bidog*, the Old Man, may be accounted for by the fact that the *bidog* is the father of all *hala*, or so the Menri Semang declare.

While the *bidog* was present in the *pano* hut the band of singers grew more and more excited. Various questions were addressed to him, all of which he answered in the *chenoi* language. Quite an animated conversation with him developed, interspersed even with a good deal of jesting.

The *pano* hut is erected especially when there are sick to be healed, as the *chenoi* reveal to the *hala* the kind of disease from which the patient is suffering and the appropriate remedy. Often, however, these *pano* ceremonies serve only for entertainment, and take the place among the Kěnta of the dance we are already acquainted with.

The office of the *hala* is intimately connected with the *chenoi* apparition. The *chenoi* themselves are *hala*, and certain animals are endowed with the *hala's* special qualities; just as some animals are associated also in some way with the deity.

All tribes distinguish between a greater and a lesser *hala*. The Kěnta call the greater *hala nakil* (genuine *hala*), the lesser *hala puteu*. The *puteu* knows the diseases of his patients but not the remedies, while the *hala nakil* knows both the disease and its appropriate remedy. The *puteu* is in every way dependent upon the *hala nakil*. Among the Kěnta, also, the *hala* heals with the *chebuch* stone, as we have already observed among the Jahai. He uses both incantations and medicines.

Cuts are covered with lime and then bound with cloth.

For toothache, the sap of a tree with long leaves (*tenkurl*) is smeared on the outside of the cheek, or, if the tooth is hollow, placed in the cavity. This is said to stop the pain at once.

In case of headache the sap of the *areka* nut is rubbed on and an incantation spoken, but I know from the Jahai that this remedy is of Malay origin. For coughs and hoarseness, a decoction made from the stems of the *bekot* (Malay, *salah*) is drunk. The stems are pounded when green and boiled in water.

For internal pains the abdomen is massaged with warm cloths.

Constipation is treated by drinking a decoction made from the bark of four different kinds of tree (Malay, *bekak*, *jangus*, *rameh*, *mokek*).

*Awei taji manu* (Malay, *blusok ayam*) is used to allay fever, the root being boiled and the sweetish brew drunk ; another method is to shred the roots and stems of *langod koh* (Malay, *yadam utan*) and drink the very bitter brew, which at once produces sweating.

It is also to be noted that the Kĕnta know, and use, various kinds of aphrodisiacs and means of producing abortion.

In the eyes of the Semang, the *hala* is not by any means a magician or quack salver in the ordinary sense of the word ; he is rather an envoy of their god, a priest-medicine-man drawing all his power from Kaei, the supreme being. Even when he speaks an incantation, or a magic formula, it is to Kaei that he calls. " If Kaei had not inspired the *hala* and had not taught him the words, how should he heal ? " Hempĕlabn asked, when I raised certain points with him.

That the *hala* is actually the son of Kaei is only indirectly revealed in Semang stories. The Menri in Kĕlantan say that in the beginning there were three on the earth : Karei, Takel, and Hanei, their son. When the three separated, Karei went to heaven, Takel into the earth, and Halei, who became a tiger, into the forest. As a tiger he became the policeman of his father Karei. The greater *hala* is in contact with these three persons, but the lesser *hala* only with the tiger. The *hala* is identical with Hanei, the tiger, and is therefore the son of the deity. But, as I have already mentioned, such a tiger is not in the least dangerous for members of the tribe, rather does he help them, *e.g.* by killing game for them.

Owing to his unusual nature the *hala* has a special kind of burial. The Kĕnta told me that the *hala nakil* is buried in the ground in such a way that his head appears above the

surface. Over this a protecting roof is erected. They firmly believe that he does not remain in the grave, but rises from the dead. He goes to Kaei, eastward (not westward, like the other souls of the dead), along the *galogn Manau*. At the near end of the *galogn* sits the serpent *Kemai bintegn*, who is able to blow himself out. If the *hala* succeeds in slipping past him, he reaches Kaei unharmed and becomes a great *hala*; otherwise he is killed and goes to the place below the *rankel*, where the dead *chenoi* abide. He may, however, first become a tiger.

The lesser *hala* is not buried in the earth, but his body is left exposed.

As I had plenty of instructors at my disposal, I was able to employ the time of my stay among the Kēnta very profitably. Unfortunately, however, the weather was not calculated to raise my spirits. It rained almost daily, and often so heavily that the water would flow in streams under the people's bamboo beds. The leaking roofs of the shelters had to be constantly repaired, the holes being stopped up from within by pushing in large leaves. Hempēlabn had even fitted to his roof shelters a primitive but practical device which gave him shelter, not only from rain, but, when necessary, from the sun. Two lianas to which pegs were tied hung from the ends of the protecting roof. When he wanted to protect himself against wind-driven rain, he pulled the roof lower down and drove the pegs into the ground, the roof being pulled down low. But the people's dwellings were in a miserable state and, although I was not much better off than they and caught a chill from the cold and damp, I could not help pitying them.

The life, however, seemed to suit them. They might well have improved matters, for they knew well how to weave mats upon which they could sleep at night. They might also have built better huts which would have protected them against any weather. But they did none of these things. In a few days they would be moving on, so why take unnecessary



trouble? They were glad to be able to take with them the bare necessities. This was explained to me by Hempĕlabn and I had to agree. The people adapted themselves absolutely to their mode of life.

One rainy day I said to a young man: "*Susah hidop dalam utan, hidop orang utan bukan hidop!*" (This life in the forest is dreadful, this existence of the Orang-Utan is not a life at all!) Whereupon the youthful philosopher replied—not without dignity: "*Tentu susah, tetapi hidop juga!*" (Certainly it is hard, but it *is* a life!) That settled the matter. Nothing better proved how deeply the Semang treasures his forest life and his freedom.

Except for the few hours I spent sunning myself on the grass in the open, I spent my time sitting under my roof busy with my notes. We had no adventures. From time to time some inquisitive Malays would appear from the neighbouring kampongs to look at the white Orang-Utan. I always found these visits a nuisance.

During the first days of my stay in the kampong the Malay chief came under my roof, a visit which had to be honoured with cigarettes. The man warned me against marauders, of whom he said there were many in the neighbourhood. He also advised me to go and live with him, where it would be much safer. I misunderstood the man and thought he wanted to make money out of me. His intentions, however, were honourable, as I soon discovered. One morning the old cripple, Juke, called on me and asked me whether I had noticed Anything during the night. As it happened, I had slept really well and had noticed nothing out of the ordinary. The poor cripple, who had scarcely closed an eye all night, reported that a number of Malays had been prowling round the camp, but had not dared to break in. Hempĕlabn, on coming back from the kampong, also reported that ten Malays had come to our camp in the night to rob me. When Lebai returned at midday from making purchases in Kupang, he brought me a greeting from the *dato* and the well-meant

advice that I should take the precaution of leaving the camp in the forest as danger was threatening me.

I now connected the many Malay visits made in the daytime with the planned raid. Perhaps they wanted to spy upon me. That they should not have dared to bring off the raid in spite of this may have been because my hut lay in the middle of the camp and so was protected to some extent by the shelters surrounding it.

I remained where I was, but thought it wiser to bring my baggage into safety, for there was no doubt that the Malays were after that rather than my own unimportant life. But nothing would induce me to leave the camp. I had still so much to learn about the Kěnta tribe, which is now dying out, and this I could only do by direct observation.

Vaughan Stevens tells of a "soul bird," *tiltol tapa*, by the eating of which the soul of the child is brought into the mother's body. I never came across this theory. The Kěnta know the bird *tiltol tapa*, a 'ula bird which forms the foetus in the mother's womb, but it can only do this because it is a *hala*. This has nothing to do with sex totemism.

The *chimioi* bird *hala* is also known, which attaches itself to the young men up to the time of marriage and keeps everything clean around them, but after marriage ceases to hover near them. The *hala* bird *sulo* has the older children under its protection, and the *wa* the newly born. Pregnant women must refrain from eating certain animals, for otherwise the child is epileptic; a belief that we have met with among the Jahai.

As with the Jahai, birth takes place in the hut. The mother is tended by women. On the sixth day after the birth she can continue her work. The umbilical cord is cut with a sharpened rib of the *chimchobn* (Malay, *chuchob*), the placenta (*so*) being buried in the place where the child is born.

The midwife gives the mother a decoction (*ubat panah*) to drink, apparently to prevent her conceiving again too soon, for although the Kěnta are very fond of their children, they



THE WOMEN OF THE SEMANG CAMP (p. 258)



BATEK COIFFURES (p. 275)



MENRI MEN (p. 272)



MENRI MATRON FROM THE SETONG (p. 272)

now fear the burden of a large family. I came across one young man who did not intend to have any children. The midwife is paid. I was told that her office is handed down from one generation to another like that of the *hala*. The office of *hala* goes from the father to the eldest, or youngest son. On the day following the birth, the midwife names the child. If two midwives assist at the birth, the child receives two names. There were indeed individuals in the camp who were called by two names. The midwife also pierces the child's ear-lobes for the ornaments to be worn later. Twins are known among the KĚnta, but no one could remember a case of triplets.

When a youth wishes to marry a girl, he gives the prospective father-in-law ten Malay dollars, and also a pot, a bush-knife, and a cloth, which his own mother presents to the prospective mother-in-law, who in her turn passes it on to the bride. The youth does not himself give it to the girl of his choice, as he is supposed to be shy of her.

On the day upon which the girl's hand is solicited, her mother becomes the stepmother of the suitor, and the two have to observe all the proscriptions which apply to such relationship. She remains his mother-in-law even if the marriage comes to nothing. In the same way sexual intercourse without marriage makes a girl's mother the man's stepmother.

Among the KĚnta the children's wishes decide a marriage, never those of the parents, who place no obstacles in the way.

A wife is sought from a distant camp, in order to avoid marriage between relatives, for, as a rule, only relatives live in a camp together. Marriage between brothers and sisters, and between cousins, is not permitted. Nor may a man marry the midwife of his own camp.

There are no marriage ceremonies except that the bridal pair eat together. Consummation of the marriage the same day in the camp is forbidden.

According to Hempĕlabn, constancy before marriage is not

observed, and particularly girls who have no parents will give themselves in exchange for presents. Such conduct, however, is regarded as theft, and punished as such. Nor are married women always faithful to their husbands. What has been said of orphan girls applies similarly to widows. But should a widow become pregnant she must be married. In this case the marriage gift is only three dollars.

Adultery is regarded as a serious crime and is to-day punished by a fine of ten dollars or by flogging, which is carried out by the oldest member of the family.

In the case of separation the child remains with the mother, but there is nothing to prevent its staying with the father if the latter lives in or visits the camp.

If the man seeks separation, the marriage presents are not returned, though they are if it is the woman who seeks it. The leader of the group negotiates these matters.

Right of property applies to both the man and the woman, and not only does it cover the usual everyday necessities, which are personal property and which, except clothing, can be used by the other members of the camp, but also immovable property, such as *durian* trees. Hempĕlabn claimed ownership of ten *durian* trees. When his father died, he divided his property between the two children, Hempĕlabn and his sister. The woman does not after marriage renounce the possession of her own property, though the husband shares its fruits. In the case of her death it goes to her children, and in default of children, to her brothers and sisters, not to the husband. In the same way the husband's property goes to his children or relatives and not to the wife.

The Semang have no initiation ceremonies of any kind. When a stranger has learnt the language and adapts himself to the customs of the tribe, he becomes forthwith a member of it.

The Kĕnta seem to come to an agreement on the subject of a camp chief. He must be, if not the oldest, at any rate an elderly man. He must be distinguished by great judgment

and clemency, to be in a position to settle any disputes that arise. Juke was a camp chief, though he was not the oldest member.

The burial ceremonial of the KĚnta differs from that of the Jahai. After death the body is wrapped in a cloth and borne out on men's shoulders. Outside the camp a grave is dug, with digging sticks, to a depth of about one metre. The body is laid in a side niche, with the knees drawn in and the head bent to one side towards the west. The side niche is then secured with bamboos and covered with leaves before the earth is thrown in. Over it bamboo canes are then laid longways and held in position by two others laid diagonally across, which in their turn are fixed in forked sticks driven into the ground. This protection is to prevent the body being scratched up by wild animals.

While the women are building a shelter over the grave, the men light fires at both ends. Food is laid on the grave ; in the case of children it is also placed inside the grave, because it is thought that children will make the journey to the beyond more slowly than adults and therefore require more food. But the most important thing of all is the placing at either end of the grave of two sticks marked with charcoal and driven into the ground. These are the *tankel*, said to be a protection against the tiger.

Another kind of marked stick, the *soed kemoid*, is stuck into the hut roofs of the camp to keep away the spirit of the dead, which, on catching sight of it, flees in terror.

Two of these *soed* are placed in the girdle of the corpse so that the deceased may prove his identity in the beyond. Without these he will not be admitted into the kingdom of the dead ; will not be recognized as a dead man by the keeper of the kingdom of the dead (a *bidog*), and must return to life and rise again. These views are unknown among the Jahai.

The kingdom of the dead lies in the west and is called Talogn. The dead man first travels along the *galogn Beled*, at the near end of which sits Mampes, an unconquerable and

powerful Semang, the guardian of the kingdom of the dead. He shows the souls the way to the *galogn Mapi*, which lies on the seashore. When he arrives there, the joints of the dead man are dislocated, so that he may look like all the other dead, and he is washed with *kunyit* water. In the kingdom of the dead stands a great tree, *Mapi*, which bears on one side green flowers and on the other yellow. The green are for the dead, the yellow for the living. A *hala* may also enter the kingdom of the dead, in which case he lives up in the *Mapi* tree, not at its foot where the other souls abide.

After the burial the camp is speedily changed, from fear of the dead man's spirit. For seven days no bead ornaments nor combs may be worn, and there must be no singing.

The spirit of the dead, from fear of which the camp is often moved many miles, is called *kemoid*. It likes to enter the huts of men and kills them because it regards them as its kin. It is white in form and cannot speak. It can, however, be seen. In the kingdom of the dead the dead eat only the shadows of things; while they sleep in the daytime, they wander at night in search of food.

On the seventh day after the death a feast is prepared. Rice is obtained, game killed, and the best revel possible is held. Bush-knives are clashed together to frighten the *kemoid*. On the fourteenth and twenty-first days the feast is repeated and with this the death ceremonies are concluded.

All through, the Kěnta seem to be of livelier temperament than the Jahai. They wear more ornaments and sing more often. Their conversation is also more animated. Quarrels are not infrequent among them. Once the bone of contention was a bush-knife. An orphan child was accused by a woman of having taken it away. Although the child affirmed its innocence with tears, the woman did not cease scolding until the stepfather felt obliged to take the child under his protection. This only added fuel to the fire, and even Juke's attempts at mediation were of no avail. In the end the knife was found and the quarrel came to an end.



As clothing, the women often wear girdles made of *urat batu* or *ayam* bark, from which head-bands (*benolagn*) are also made, these being stained red with *areka* juice or blackened with charcoal. Bamboo combs, into the teeth of which sweet-smelling herbs are fastened, are much worn by the women, but only one comb at a time. The women's coiffure is arranged so that the hair rises at the back of the head to a tuft, in which the comb is worn, the rest of the hair being shaved close. The Kĕnta men do not now wear the tuft of which their forefathers were so proud. The women often cover their breasts with a cloth which is hung round the neck.

The Kĕnta eats little meat, at least I very seldom saw killed game brought into the camp. Whenever this did happen it was generally bamboo rat. Once when an ape was brought into the camp the children raised a regular howl of joy. The animal was soon cut up, roasted, and eaten. Some animals the Kĕnta will not eat, for instance the bear, the elephant, and the tiger, because they believe that they were once men. The dog and cat are not eaten either, according to Hempĕlabn because their forefathers had not known these animals. There is no doubt that the cat is not of Semang origin, and the dog too may very well have been introduced by the Sakai, for the dogs of both tribes are of the same breed.

To complete the picture I will give, in brief, a few of the Kĕnta fables and myths.

The Kĕnta maintain that the moon is human, sometimes regarding it as a child, sometimes as an old man. During an eclipse all Kĕnta must help the moon by singing, shouting, and making a clatter, to frighten away the dragon which is threatening to swallow it. This dragon is none other than the sun, which is the enemy of the moon because the moon stole the sun's children, as we know from the Jahai.

Every evening the sun is swallowed by a large bird, the *hengagn*, from which it emerges the following morning at the other end. This bird reaches from east to west and dwells below the earth.

The fables are usually about the tiger, the bear, the tortoise, or the elephant, all of which are said to have been men (Semang).

#### THE TIGER AND THE TORTOISE

The tiger (of course still a man) was on a journey in the company of the men (*meni*). They came to a great sheet of water. The men came across by spanning the water with a *temtobn* rope.

On the bank was a thorn. The human tortoises came to the water, caught hold of the thorn in their mouths and swung themselves across. When they were over, the tiger-man also came up. He looked for a ford but could not find one. He met a tortoise who was just swinging himself across. The tiger saw this and asked the way: "Which is the way?" The tortoise told him. He was to seize the thorn in his mouth and swallow so that the thorn came out behind as in his own case (his tail). The tiger did as he was told and the thorn stuck out behind. Thus he became a real tiger and went into the forest.

#### THE TIGER AND THE BEAR

The bear-men (the Semang) had many huts. A newly married couple went off into the forest. The tiger came and ate the man up. The woman returned to the camp and told her people that the tiger had eaten her husband. They all went off to Malaya. The Malays offered them a place under their huts. The bear-men became bears. The Malays saw this and killed them.

The legend of the hero Chemampes, who discovered fire and the use of iron, runs as follows:

Chemampes lived with the bears (the Semang). He went out and became the *mark* (a plant), for he could assume many shapes. A bear (Semang) cut down the *mark*, which fell to the ground and became the tuber *las*. The bear dug up the tuber, which rolled away and fell into the water, where it

became the tortoise. The bear-man caught it again and threw it out of the water, whereupon it became the rhinoceros, which the bear-man shot dead with a bow. All the bears (men) then left their haunts to live near the dead rhinoceros. They were about to cut Ta Chemampes in pieces, but he rose up and smote all the bear-men so that they died.

Ta Chemampes cut rattan to use as a saw. In this way fire came into existence. He looked for iron, and when he had found it he returned home and made a bellows. He made bush-knives, iron, and fire. He gave some to all who wanted any.

My studies among the KĚnta were progressing excellently. My experience among the Jahai indicated the line to pursue and was of great value for all my subsequent investigations. My only regret, and that a serious one, was that I had not brought the phonograph with me. Lebai went several times to Baling to enquire about the machine, which was to have been sent on to me. I was very anxious to obtain a record of the beautiful KĚnta songs. Unfortunately, the phonograph never arrived, so that I had to contemplate a possible second visit to the KĚnta for this important piece of work.

First, however, I set out for Baling to visit the neighbouring tribe of the KĚnta, the KĚnsiu.

Men, women, and children accompanied me in a long procession as far as the main road, a distance of many miles. The women and children were decked in foliage and flowers. An English surveyor, whom I met on the way, gazed for a long time after the strange procession. When I met him again later, he confessed he had thought I was a film producer or connected in some way with the theatre.

## VIII

### AMONG THE KĚNSIU IN KEDAH

**I**N Baling I went to the guest house, where I dealt with some correspondence. Lebai had gone to Siong to arrange for the Kěnsiu to build a hut for me.

In the evening I was entertained by a European who had been living for many years in the interior of Malaya and to whom conversation with another European was an unusual treat. Over a glass of whisky we discussed the world in general. He was an educated man who had been driven into the wild interior by ill luck. He wondered at my idealism and cheerfulness, for he knew how hard and dangerous the life of an explorer is. His own life he regarded as just about worth a bullet, although he had all kinds of luxuries at hand. We represented two opposite poles ; he, completely sceptical, envying me my belief in God. He regarded the natives, Malays, and Orang-Utan, of whose faith I told him, as happy, and only regretted that European civilization was beginning to infect them with its poisonous influence.

When I left his villa I felt glad that I had built on firm ground. I had, at least, a goal ahead for which I could always work.

The following morning I was already on the way to the Kěnsiu on the Siong. Lebai had reported favourably. It appeared the people had fled after our first visit and had had to be brought back by the Malays, but now they had taken courage and were willing to receive me among them. The Siong plain was inundated, and we had constantly to wade through water. When I arrived, the men were still busy building the hut.

The camp, with its eight shelters, offered me many



MENRI WOMAN WITH ORNAMENTS OF FLOWERS



MENRI BOYS DIGGING ROOTS (p. 272)



HALA, WEARING FLOWERS, WITH WOMEN IN FRONT OF THE PANO HUT  
(p. 224)



MENRI CHILDREN (p. 272)

advantages. It lay on the edge of a clearing upon which the sun shone, and quite close could be heard the rushing of a mountain stream. I was once more able to bathe without fear of the leeches, which had been such a pest on the Kupang river.

I soon established good relations with the people, and succeeded in acquiring specimens from them. Nor did they make any difficulties about being photographed; in fact, they showed their good-will in many ways. Unfortunately there was no one among them capable of instructing me quickly and easily about their customs and outlook. The Siong Kěnsiu were not quick-witted enough for this.

I soon discovered that their language was almost identical with that of the Kěnta, which made my task easier. With the help of Kěnta and Jahai, I acquired a grip of the Kěnsiu language, went with the people into the forest, got them to show me how they obtain and prepare the *ipoh* poison for their blow-pipe darts, and many other things. Each day I was in the plantation, walking up and down in the sun by a huge fallen tree that lay in the middle.

The chief personage of the camp was the old grey-haired Timun, who was at least sixty. He was tall and lean and went about with the help of a stick. His eyes blazed like coals and revealed the alertness of his mind. He was a widower living with two of his children. He and his wife had had twelve children, most of whom were dead. He himself suffered from a stubborn asthma which often kept him awake and made him unfit for work. In addition he was toothless, so that he could no longer chew betel or eat maize. Being a confirmed betel-chewer, he had to have it crushed first in a bamboo, as is the practice of the Malays. Betel-chewing is universal among the Kěnta and Kěnsiu, and is practised with the same passion as the smoking of tobacco. Timun was of cheerful disposition and fond of a joke.

One day he told me that he would be glad to die, as his breathing caused him so much trouble that he could find

nothing to do. That was in the morning, but in the afternoon, when the sky had fully cleared, he withdrew what he had said.

He was always ready to answer questions. Unhappily his conversation was so rambling and his diction so indistinct that I learned little from him.

One night, when all were peacefully stretched on their beds, the old man took it into his head to sing. He told us he wanted to show us what it sounded like to sing without any teeth. I had repeatedly asked him to sing, but he had always refused. Now, however, he was letting himself go, to the amusement of all. Timun was a nephew of To Chia, a *puteu* well known among the Kěnsiu and distinguished by great courage and judgment.

W. Skeat mentions in his book To Chia who still lives in the memories of the Kěnsiu. He and his brother Běrtam were greater *halas*, who knew how to protect the Semang against the Malay. To Chia's grave was near the camp, but his body was no longer in it, for shortly after the burial the grave had fallen in. To Chia had left the grave, as a *hala* does. This great Kěnsiu was, moreover, said to be invulnerable. Timun himself seemed to be a sort of *hala*, although he would not admit it.

A similar position seemed to be held by Langset, a man of about forty, who acted as deputy for Timun. He was reserved and suspicious. On several occasion I observed him listening from a distance to the conversation of the Malays. He was silent without being unfriendly, but was a model of industry.

I must mention a third, Ramlei. He was a Jahai by birth, a man who in a monastery would have made a model monk and as a burgess would have set an example to all citizens. He went about his business quietly and calmly, never hurrying himself unduly. He was not endowed with great mental gifts and so could not be reproached for never achieving anything remarkable. At the same time he often insisted on talking authoritatively, when no one was listening. Slow of mind and laborious in explanation, though very discursive,



he was at the same time always sincere. He was a genuine, honest Semang, though by no means a light in the forest.

As with all other Semang tribes, among the KĚnsiu I used to note the various gifts of individuals and at the same time the influence individuals exerted upon the community. Unfortunately I met no KĚnsiu of the type of men like To Chia or To Bĕrtam as they had been described to me by this tribe. Such personalities could not have failed to exert a deep influence on their fellows.

If cultural progress is dependent upon outstanding talent, so-called genius, why have the Semang scarcely progressed a step in so many thousands of years? I do not think this can be put down to lack of intelligence. Their minds are as alert as those of other men, primitive and civilized. It must also be conceded that they have outstanding personalities in their midst. But the genius can only make himself felt through large aggregations of other people. As the Semang are so small in numbers, genius has small scope for development and so remains sterile.

When all is said and done, cultural progress is based on specialization of labour, whether mental or physical, as we have seen clearly in the case of our own civilization. Specialization was only made possible by the massing together of large numbers of people. The fact that with us every sphere, either of knowledge or technique, is continually becoming more specialized, nay, over-specialized, is the reason why cultural development grows so rapidly. In my opinion specialization, even in its lower stages, means cultural progress. As soon as a man or a family devoted itself exclusively to any form of manual labour, let us say the work of a blacksmith, and in this way assured his living, a step forward in the smith's craft was at once possible, for the smith could give his whole time and energy and all the originality of his mind to the craft to which he had exclusively devoted himself. If there were enough people around him to absorb his products he would have no further anxiety about his livelihood.

This kind of specialization, even in its earliest form, was not known, indeed was not possible among the Semang so long as they lived only in small groups. A specialist would find no consumers for his products and would be doomed to starvation. To avoid this fate he was compelled to go out in search of food like all the rest, neglecting his special gifts and skill. He would make his own implements, his bow and his arrows very skilfully, much better than others who were less expert; possibly some one who appreciated a finished piece of work would occasionally try to barter it from him, but that would be exceptional.

On the other hand, the spiritual equanimity and content of the Semang are rooted in their peculiar mode of life. They busy themselves with every kind of activity and there is no need for any of their talents to fall into disuse—as is unavoidable with specialization, where only one side is developed. All-round activity and all-round interest, however, lead to content, because they develop the whole man. There could be no doubt that the Semang was truly contented and enjoyed life. Not a single case of suicide was known among them; they do not even know what it means.

Apart from those I have named, none of the inhabitants of the camp stood out particularly from the others. The women held themselves for the most part aloof, whereas the men liked to come to my hut in the evening and chat or sing late into the night with me and my servant, gladly accepting my presents of tobacco. Perhaps it was the tobacco that was the chief attraction.

Ramlei, whose shelter was on the left of mine, lived with his wife and a boy of his earlier marriage whose mother was dead. The boy was an obstinate little fellow. One morning I saw him being scolded by his father and stepmother as he sat in front of his rice which he was refusing to eat. He hung his head defiantly and did not stir. When, at last, the grandfather Timun also descended upon him, he moved his fingers and began to eat. But one could see how hard he found it to give way.

There were few children in the camp, and only two boys, who usually played together, while the little girls went out every day with their mothers and aunts into the forests in search of roots.

It only took me a few days to persuade the inhabitants to sing for me. I was greatly surprised when I heard the beautiful melodies. This was a change, something quite different from what I had heard among the KĚnta and Jahai. At once I sent my servant to the coast to look for the missing phonograph, as I was very anxious to make records of the songs. While Lebai was absent, Ramlei undertook his work to the best of his ability. During this time I learned from him that the KĚnsiu are not afraid of their dead, or of graves, as the Jahai are. During the first seven days it is the custom to avoid the grave, but not after. This seemed to me a suitable opportunity to acquire a skeleton. So far I had never asked any group to show me a grave, as I knew that this would bring my relations with them to an end; and consequently I had given up hope of ever possessing a Semang skeleton. What Ramlei had told me, however, gave me fresh hope. I asked him to show me a grave, if there was one in the neighbourhood, as I should like to photograph it. He was willing to do so. When, however, I showed that I was serious, he made excuses in the course of which I discovered that he was really afraid. I promised him a valuable present and we then set out.

The forest path we followed was completely deserted and I found that it was avoided because it passed near the grave. From the path Ramlei showed me a high tree behind which the grave lay. I made my way towards it through the bush, and after a bit he hesitatingly followed me. The mound of the grave was partially fallen in. A great hole gaped in one end through which the interior could be seen. Ramlei said the remains had probably been dragged off by a wild pig.

At last we cleared away the earth that covered the bamboo resting-place sufficiently to see the skeleton, embedded in soil.

So far I was pleased with my find. I gave Ramlei the present I had promised him and we went home. Soon afterwards I set out again with my camera, this time telling the negrito, who was anxious to do me another service, to remain behind.

Armed with a bush-knife and with as much newspaper as I could lay hands on in my side-pocket, I made towards the big tree, whose position I had carefully noted. Soon I was standing in its shade beside the grave. All around was the gloom of the forest. Through the foliage the sunlight danced like ghosts, now here, now there. I could not repress a shudder as I set up the camera. Involuntarily I cast a glance around me to see that no Semang or tiger was watching me. Then I opened the grave. As it was hardly a metre deep, I was able to dig out the bones with comparatively little difficulty. The bush-knife proved very useful for rummaging about among the earth and lifting out the bones. Except for the thigh-bone, with which some porcupine had probably forestalled me, all the bones were there. I wrapped my treasure in paper and leaves, closed the grave, and stole back. After stowing the booty under a thick bush I sauntered back to the camp. On the way I met old Timun, who looked at me curiously, for I was all smeared with earth. I answered his question evasively and hurried to the stream to wash.

The second part of the task I carried out the following morning, when I brought out the bones from under the bush, placed them in an empty sack, and made my way through the bushes to a secluded place by the stream, where I washed and dried them. I was in high spirits and sang as I worked as though it were the pleasantest job in the world.

At noon I was back in the encampment, with the sack over my shoulder. In order to avert any suspicion I hung it openly under my roof and in the evening nailed it into a box which served both as table and desk, in which capacities I continued to use it.

It was my habit to bathe every morning in the stream near by. On the morning after my body-snatching expedition,

when I returned to the camp, I found that the women and children had already left, as I thought for their daily forage. It did not occur to me that they had left at an unusually early hour.

Soon the men came up, in ones and two, and each told me where he was going to and what he intended to do. The last to come was Ramlei, my deputy-cook and servant. He was going to find new parts for his blow-pipe.

I soon found myself alone in the camp and this provided an opportunity to bring my notes up to date. About ten o'clock I looked round to see if anyone was coming. There was no one in sight except a dog which had remained behind and now looked appealingly and hungrily at me.

A little later some Malays appeared and asked me where the Orang-Utan had gone to. What business was it of theirs where they had gone to? I still suspected nothing. When midday came and still no one had returned, I made a round of the camp and saw to my surprise that the people had taken all their gear with them. Then it was all clear. They had gone for good.

Feeling very disheartened, I crept back under my shelter. Now I understood the Malay's visit, the sudden disappearance of the women and children, and the farewells of the men. Naturally I had lost all appetite for the *mandioka* roots which were to be the midday meal. The dog at my side had a good day. I found myself alone in the wilderness with this dog and the skeleton in my box. I thought it would be unwise to spend the night alone there, as only the day before Ramlei's wife had come running into the camp to say she had heard a tiger close to the encampment, and my servant could not be expected to return until the evening of the next day. I was not, however, prepared to abandon my baggage, and in the afternoon hurried over to the nearest Malay kampong to persuade some one to spend the night with me in the forest. I was successful, and in the evening two Malays came back with me to the camp. From them I also learned the probable reason for the

puzzling departure of the Orang-Utan. They must have watched me cleaning the bones, for they had asked the Malays : " What is the *gob* doing with the bones he is washing in the water and drying in the sun ? " My strange occupation must naturally have filled them with an incurable fear of me. At all events they had gone never to return, and I could not call them back as no one knew where they had gone to. In this way my ten days' stay among them came to an end.

Leaving one Malay in the camp, I hurried over with the other to a neighbouring camp which I had already visited accompanied by the Kënsiu. On that occasion I had found three shelters and come upon a dreadful spectacle. In one of the shelters was sitting an old woman, all eaten away, who could only with difficulty drag herself forward on all fours. When I gave her some tobacco her distorted face twisted into a grin of delight. In the hut next to hers lay a consumptive boy whose body burned with fever. Another boy, wasted with starvation, sat beside him. The third hut sheltered a young couple with a baby. The young man had to provide for all the inhabitants of the camp, which could have been no light task. I had been so moved at all this, and the picture had made such a deep impression upon me, that I could not bring myself to take a photograph of the camp. I gave the people some presents and went away. When I returned this time the camp was deserted. No doubt they, too, had been warned against me and had fled.

As the Malay knew of a third camp, we immediately went towards it. We crossed the rice fields of the Siong valley, frequently sinking knee-deep into the mud, for as it was the tilling season all were under water.

At last we came to a slope up the far bank of the river and found ourselves upon a path leading to the Orang-Utan camp. A little later we reached the camp itself in which there were six men. The women had apparently gone to the forest in search of roots. So far, thank God, the story of my ruthless desecration of the grave had not reached them. I soon



MENRI GIRLS WITH PAINTED FOREHEADS (p. 272)



CHINESE COOLIE WITH SEMANG WOMAN (p. 272)



MENRI PLAYING THE FLUTE (p. 272)



MEN OF THE SETONG RIVER (p. 272)



arranged with five men to fetch my baggage from the forest. I also tried to barter for some implements, whereupon everyone hurried off into the forest, apparently to fetch the things. What I had suspected was true: the women and children had fled into the forest on my arrival. I now urged that they should return, and cracked a few jokes which made the men laugh, whereupon the women emerged timidly from the undergrowth. When I had taken a few photographs the people brightened up and became approachable. The women begged for glass beads, and one young woman even called me *kejuch* (young man), a piece of flattery intended to stimulate my generosity. When I replied that I was already old and a *bidog* she would not agree, but protested laughing: "*Bja bo bidog, bo kejuch*" (You're no old man, you're a youth).

I hurried back with my new bearers to the camp, where Lebai was already waiting for me, unfortunately without the phonograph. Without further hesitation I hurried to Baling, where I had a row with the post office official, a Kling, who had mislaid my apparatus somewhere and furthermore refused to cash a money order for me; the same night I arrived in Penang.

Two days later I was back in the forest with the phonograph and the necessary money. I at once made for the new camp. On the way I met its chief, the aged, ailing Jelej, who, tortured with terrible gout, was hobbling along leaning on a stick. We had constantly to pass through water, where I was able to help my companion. His wife, loaded with a child, the rucksack and the blow-pipe, followed behind. Jelej's other child was being carried by a young man who happened to be staying in the camp. The camp had been moved to another place, where Jelej and his people intended to lay out a plantation. Jelej also wanted to make an attempt at hoeing.

About an hour later we had reached the new camping-ground, which the women had already cleared of undergrowth. Thick clouds of smoke from a small fire were rising skyward through the bamboo brake. I at once installed myself among

these people and I had no cause to regret that Timun and his companions had deserted me so abruptly, for I found an unusually talented teacher in Jelej. The man was very outspoken and at the same time tactful.

I will try to set down Jelej's lore, with some additions which I owe to Timun. To Jelej is due the honour of initiating me into the religious system of the Semang.

Into my conversations with Jelej I wove the knowledge I had acquired among the Jahai and Kěnta, and from Timun Jelej told me that Karei lived alone with his wife, Manoid, and had no one else with him, that he was somewhat taller of stature than the *chenoi*, but white in colour, and that he was a *raja*.

This prompted me to ask about Ta Pedn, who, according to the Jahai, was Karei's son, according to the Kěnta, his younger brother.

Jelej's answer was significant. After listening to me calmly until I had finished, he said briefly: "Then they have all deceived you (*tipu*)! Karei is Ta Pedn, they are one and the same. Ta Pedn lives up above and makes the thunder."

But when I contended that up to now he had only spoken of Karei and never of Ta Pedn, he answered, equally laconically, "Because you also had always spoken of Karei, because you already knew him (*sudah besah*). But the Kěnsiu say Ta Pedn and not Karei."

I now remembered that old Timun always talked of Ta Pedn when I mentioned Karei, and the same thing had occurred with the *hala Hitam* among the Kěnta.

Jelej further remarked that *Ta* was equivalent to *To* and meant grandfather, whereas Manoid was called Ja Manoid, Grandmother Manoid. But Manoid was the wife of Ta Pedn.

On another occasion Jelej told me of a younger brother of Pedn who was called Kalchegn, and lived above Pedn in a place called Uwi, near the place of darkness. Kalchegn holds the liana to which the sun is tied and swings it round. Pedn is afraid lest his younger brother should let go of the liana,

which would cause everything on earth to be shattered and turned to water. Kalchegn is a *hala*.

The dwelling-place of Pedn and the *chenoi* is beneath the sun in the kingdom of light, but Manoid lives in the earth.

In the beginning Pedn and his wife, Manoid, already existed. Pedn had neither father nor mother. He lived with his wife in the firmament, where the sun too already was. The dung-beetle (*tahobn* ; Malay, *kumang*) drew the earth out of the mud and the sun dried it and made it firm. The earth bore within itself all the seeds of the trees and plants, but there were neither men nor animals. When the two dwellers in heaven saw the earth they descended to it.

Manoid dreamed of a child and asked Ta Pedn for this child. Pedn went out to fetch a fruit. He spread a cloth out and let the fruit fall into it and the fruit became a child, which began to cry. It was a boy.

Manoid again dreamed of a child, this time a girl. Again she asked her husband for the child. Pedn made it as before. The fruit became a girl. The boy was called Chapong, the girl Paig. The two married each other and had children, of whom Enogn and Kajegn are the best known ; both are grandchildren of Ta Pedn. It was Enogn who created the water. The legend tells how once when Enogn was passing a rock he heard a roaring noise within it. He drew his bow and shot an arrow into the rock and the water gushed forth.

The first two human beings, Chapong and Paig, are, according to one fable, animals. The boy is the *kakub* bird (speckled rhinoceros bird). The girl is the *baul* (tortoise). Both are of course *chenoi*. According to one legend, the sense of which unfortunately I did not fully grasp, Pedn afterwards interchanged earth and heaven because he was displeased with men. Men seem to have indulged in marriage between relatives and this made Ta Pedn very angry. When he rose to heaven he ordered that certain Meni (Semang) should become animals. This is how the animals came into existence.

While Pedn and Manoid are white, Chapong is black, but Paig, on the other hand, is white.

To-day, Pedn lives in heaven with his grandchildren, Manoid in the earth with Lepei, whose origin I did not discover. Timun also related that Pedn has a cat with him which, should he loose it, would cause great destruction on the earth.

Ta Pedn causes the thunder (Karei) and hurls the lightning. On another occasion Jelej said that Chapong, Pedn's grandson, causes the thunder by beating upon the beam *chives*, or amusing himself by swinging a rope. The noise of the thunder is caused by the rope striking the beam. Pedn himself merely looks on.

The lightning is the radiance of Chapong. The Kěnsiu also believe that the thunder is Pedn's warning to sinners to expiate their transgressions. Should they hesitate to perform the blood ceremony, even only up to the fourth or fifth peal of thunder heard above the camp, they would incur the greatest danger of floods rising from the earth and trees falling upon men. This fear causes the Kěnsiu at once to snatch up the knife and stab his leg.

As I had many opportunities of seeing the blood ceremony among the Kěnsiu, I became very familiar with its details, as also with the prayers accompanying it.

Once in Timun's camp, while in the darkness of the night I was developing photographic plates with Lebai, distant thunder, which had been frequent during the last few days, was heard again. The storm came up quickly. Although it was not particularly heavy, Ramlei's wife at once prepared to carry out the blood sacrifice. She beat her shin with the flat handle of a cocoanut spoon, and then placed the blade of a pocket-knife I had given to Ramlei against her calf and struck it with a piece of wood until the blood flowed. With the knife she scraped off the blood into a bamboo that was standing ready filled with water. She poured some of the contents into the spoon and then threw it on the ground, saying: "Grandmother, down there, I throw my guilt to

Pedn ; I pay, I am not wanton." Then she shouted aloud : " *Od, od !* " and threw the blood mixture repeatedly towards the sky saying : " I pay for my guilt. Pedn, accept my guilt ! I pay for it. "

Then she poured the rest on the ground for Manoid, saying : " Thou there, grandmother ! thou below there ! Go and tell Pedn to hear that I pay. "

I was surprised that only one woman was carrying out the blood sacrifice, but I was told that it was enough for one person to make it for the whole camp, except in the case of strangers, who must do it for themselves. But if the thunder does not stop, the sacrifice must be repeated by a second person, either man or woman.

Some days later, when the men had lain down to sleep after a long talk, distant thunder was repeatedly heard. Though the approaching storm was only slight, after the second peal this same woman was again preparing for the sacrifice. From my bed I watched her strike both shins with a bamboo and then draw off the blood with a knife in the way described.

I asked my neighbour, Ramlei, who was busy with the camp fire, why it was again his wife who was performing the rite. The man replied that she had again committed a *telaïdn*, as that same day on an expedition in the forest she had caused pain to a leech.

But Ramlei also prepared himself for the sacrifice, the reason for this being that in the morning he had laughed at a dog. His dog had crept up under my shelter looking for something to pick up and an ant had crept into its nose. The animal sneezed and shook its head desperately to get rid of the ant. Ramlei had laughed at this and now had to atone with his own blood. There was nothing unusual about the way he performed the ceremony, except that he called his sin *dusa les* (guilt connected with the ant), which expression he included in his formula.

The storm had passed over us before the man had begun the sacrifice, nevertheless he did not dispense with it. This

circumstance, and the fact that the woman had begun her preparation for the atonement when the thunder was still a long way off, made me wonder whether the rolling of the thunder is only regarded as Pedn's warning to the sinner to search his conscience. The Semang certainly stood in great awe of thunder and it almost looked as though he used the sacrifice as a magic charm to drive it away. That this view is inadmissible is proved by the prayers or formulas which have nothing to do with magic, but are genuine prayers. Ta Pedn's anger is so much mollified by the sacrifice that he at once causes the thunder to cease.

The expiatory character of the sacrifice stands out even more clearly in this prayer spoken on one occasion by Jelej :

*"You there, grandmother mine, Manoid! Go up and look to your grandchildren Chalog, Chakoi, Puegn, Sud-Kelbe."* Addressing himself to Pedn, he went on: *"Od, Od! listen, even you, listen carefully with your ear! I am not lying, I pay for my guilt to you, for I fear the rolling of your thunder. Let the swinging of the rope not increase! Your grandchildren here below the Puteu Chenoi are in fear. Let not your thunder grow stronger, nor your lightning. Will you not look down? Are you not touched? The chenoi, your grandchildren tremble before your noise. We, here, fear the crashing of your thunder. Grandmother there below! Go and look to your grandchildren, Chalog, Chakoi, Ta Kelbe."*

The Kěnsiu belief is that Ta Pedn receives the blood, boils it, and gives it to the fruit trees so that it becomes various fruits for the use of man.

With a few differences the Kěnsiu decalogue agrees with that of the Kěnta, so that there is no need to deal with it in detail.

Shortly after we had settled in the new camp, I discussed with Jelej the blood sacrifice and matters connected with it. I asked the old man the following questions: "How can Ta Pedn, who sits above in the firmament far away from us, know that some one in the middle of the thickest forest has com-

mitted a *telaidn*? We are sitting in the shade of the dark forest, how can Ta Pedn see through the roof of foliage?" I thought this would perplex the old man.

Jelej looked at me earnestly and answered without a moment's reflection: "Have you seen the mountain over there? It is two days' journey from here, and those hills over there are also far away. For Ta Pedn all those mountains and everything around are as close to one another as the huts in this camp. Ta Pedn goes among them and sees everything, therefore he also knows all the *telaidn* of men."

This answer from the "savage" so surprised me that I was silent. Indeed, I should never have thought him capable of such an answer.

While the Kĕnsiu are like the other Semang in all essential points, they differ from all the rest in their burial customs. They bury the body with the head to the east. Moreover, they believe that the soul emerges from the head; but, as it does not know the direct way westward to the kingdom of the dead, it first makes its way eastward on the *galogn Menlad*. This *Menlad* is a kind of see-saw. Having reached its end, the soul is hurled upwards and flies to Ta Pedn. Ta Pedn then gives the soul a push which sends it flying on to the *galogn Mapi*, by which it then reaches the kingdom of the dead, which lies in the sea, by a westward route. The dead already there dislocate all the joints of the new arrival so that he may look like the other dead. He is questioned about his family. If he can give no information he is sent back. This gives rise to the Kĕnsiu view that the soul returns to the grave on the fourth, seventh, and fortieth days. There it eats the gifts laid in the grave, the *penito*. The souls of the dead are of small stature and play round the *Mapi* tree in the kingdom of the dead. The *bala* is buried in the same way as other mortals, but does not remain in the grave. He soon rises again and goes to Pedn. Pedn, on his arrival, gives him the usual thrust which causes the *bala* to fall down upon a mat. But Pedn feels shame at having pushed the *bala*, who calls

him father. Thenceforward the *bala* can stay and live with him.

For the rest, the Kěnsiu views about the *chenoi* and the *bala* correspond with those of the Kěnta, except that they call the greater *bala peutu* or *putau* and the lesser *snabud* (from the verb *sabud*, to exorcise). Timun maintained that the Kěnsiu had once had many *peutu*.

I also learned from this old man that the Kěnsiu were supposed to have once lived on an island in the west. How he came by the idea of an island in the sea I do not know. The Kěnsiu to-day live so far inland that they never see the sea.

Jelej again told me of a kind of negrito, called Jatehe, who are said to live on a rocky island in the sea. The Kěnsiu are not very well disposed towards the Kěnta, and even claim to have once had a feud with them. Old Timun remembered his father handling the bow, which to-day is as completely obsolete among the Kěnsiu as among the Kěnta. The wearing of the hair in a tuft was also fashionable in the time of Timun's father.

In Timun's camp I amused myself a good deal with a tame bamboo rat, a pet of Langset's little daughter. The pretty little animal often came to visit me, and especially my valise. While I lay there it would crawl over me, but it would never allow itself to be caught by anyone except its mistress, the little child herself.

Langset had also an elder daughter of about thirteen who was married to Timun's son. I never came across another instance of a girl marrying so young.

Monogamy is to-day the rule among the Semang. One man in the whole tribe is said to live with four women, otherwise an unheard-of thing among the Semang. Timun however, maintained that in the old days polygamy had been common. His own father, for instance, and To Chia had several wives.

To win a wife it is enough for the suitor to place a pot, a bush-knife, and a cloth before the prospective father-in-law.

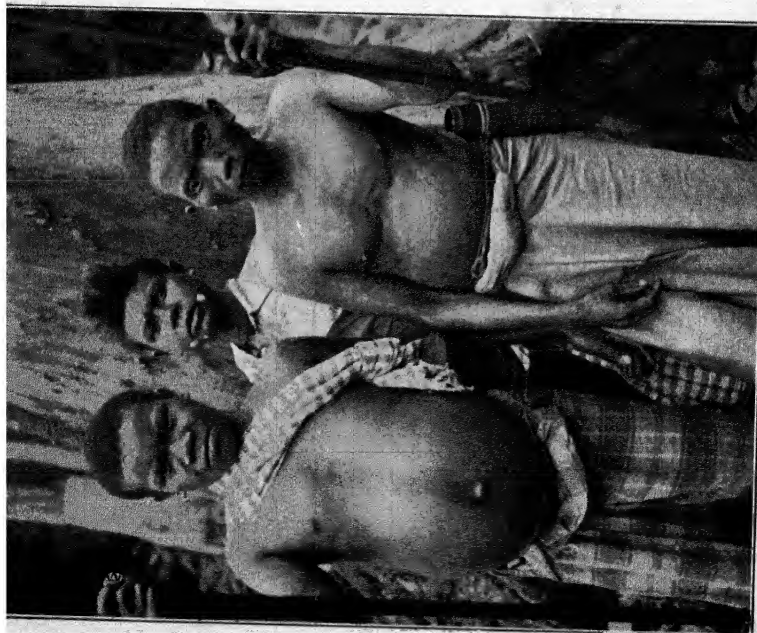




DANCING AND MUSIC AMONG THE MENRI (p. 273)



BATEK MEN OF THE CAMP ON THE ULU KRAU-CHEKA (p. 275)



MENRI—THE YOUTHFUL HALA IN CENTRE (p. 273)



BATEK WOMAN WITH JAKUDN BLOOD (p. 275)

The remaining marriage customs are substantially the same as those of the other tribes.

It was a great satisfaction to have my phonograph with me in Jelej's camp. Jelej was not a skilful teacher, but he was a willing singer. He repeatedly sat in front of the horn with the other men grouped behind him and sang intelligently, without requiring long persuasion. During the few days I spent with Jelej, I collected so much important information that I could only congratulate myself upon the flight of Timun and his companions.

I had only two months to spare for the Kěnta-Kěnsiu, so after I had assimilated the most important facts of their outlook as described by Jelej, I hurried back to the Kěnta to fill in a few lacunæ and record some songs. The old encampment had already been moved a few kilometres further inland, and here I found the whole tribe of the Kěnta-Bogn, in all sixty-one persons, collected together. When I approached the women and children ran away, but when I called to them that I was no ordinary white man, but the *Meni Pěłtau* (white Semang), the children came running up shouting.

The camp was near a kampong and entirely in the open. The Kěnta seem to live a parasitic life and attach themselves to the various kampongs to earn rice by labour of some kind. They no longer seem devoted to the forest life and nomadic habits of their fathers.

After two days' stay I returned to Baling and crossed the mountains through Perak into the Kroh district, to make the acquaintance of the brother tribe of the Kěnta-Bogn, the Kěnta-Nakil (genuine Kěnta). Unfortunately I had no opportunity of studying them closely as I only came across them in passing. They speak the language of the Kěnta, wear the head-tuft like the Jahai, and do not use the tooth file that is customary among the Kěnta-Bogn and Kěnsiu. I pressed further on into Siamese territory to find the Orang-Utan of Jarum, who, I had been told, are Jahai. I had already met several individuals of this tribe on the Perak.

W. Skeat had also been among them and studied them. In the district where I was, Baling, Kroh, Betong, Siam, Perak, and Kedah meet, as also do the four negrito tribes, Jahai, Kěnta-Nakil, Kěnta-Bogn, and Kěnsiu.

The Ford car brought me to Betong, in Siamese territory. There the police at once seized me and refused to allow me to proceed. A higher authority finally granted me permission, and with two Malays as bearers and my faithful Lebai, I hurried fifteen miles along a watercourse, until, just before reaching Jarum, we found ourselves stuck in a swamp. A passing Chinese eventually showed us the right path through the water.

Jarum is a Malay settlement that is falling into decay. The tin mines in the neighbourhood pollute the waters and make them unfit for rice cultivation. Many hundreds of Malays have therefore moved from this district to Perak, where, moreover, the taxes are less oppressive.

However, we are not interested in the Malays here but in the Jahai, who had their quarters in the forest close to the village. While Lebai was making a tumble-down hut something like fit to live in, I hurried on with a Jarum-Malay and surprised my Semang, who were not a little startled by my sudden appearance. There were four males and several females. I learned that Kěnta had once lived in this neighbourhood. It was even alleged that To Belian, a Jahai whom I remembered on the Perak, had recently stolen a Kěnta child.

The religious outlook of the Jarum Jahai inclines rather to that of the Kěnsiu than that of the Perak Jahai. The supreme being is called Ta Pedn; his wife, however, is Takel. They also practice the blood sacrifice. While the ordinary people offer their blood during a thunderstorm, the *hala* never does this, but generally holds his *chebuch* stone up to heaven and breathes on it. These people believe that Ta Pedn makes fruit for men from the blood of the sacrifice.

I was able to assist at a strange ceremony among the Jahai. When it hails they swallow the hailstones, which produce a

sharp, cold taste in the throat. A hailstone is then thrown into the air for Ta Pedn. Ta Pedn catches it and places it in the fruit and so produces *tabudn*, a bountiful fruit harvest.

The following day I made an excursion to the nearest Jahai encampment, on the Salag river. We wandered for a long time through grass steppes before re-entering the forest. After much wandering in various directions we reached a large clearing on the slopes of two hills. Two gabled shelters beckoned to us from the opposite hill. Unfortunately, apart from two women and a boy, there was no one there. The men had gone out fishing. As the time of their return was uncertain we turned back. Once more we passed through the Lalang steppe which is surrounded by a circle of mountains. We proceeded in silence, looking around us. I was shown the direction in which other groups of Jahai were said to be, and the individual mountains were pointed out to me by name, Hinas being the largest. I was also shown the spot where Pa Gĕlugor and his wife were said to be buried. All these were names already known to me from Skeat's book.

I now knew to which district the song belonged which Skeat has reproduced and which I heard old Pa Loa sing in Bersiak; it tells of the charms of this district in which I was now standing. My companions sang the song for me. In translation it runs something as follows:

The storm blows round the Hinas mountain,  
 My home, the Hinas mountain,  
 Strong winds blow there,  
 Cold winds, misty winds,  
 The storms blow.  
 The storms blow misty round the hills,  
 Strong winds blow there.  
 On the hill there is our home,  
 On the hill Hinas we live.  
 Beching hill, Siong hill,  
 Malau hill, Kuwi hill,  
 Mantan hill, Lumu hill,  
 Full of mountains is my home.

For the sake of completeness I must here say something about Semang ornamentation. None of the tribes tattoo the body ; painting of the body occurs rarely and then is only partial. This makes the beautiful ornamentation to be observed in Semang-made articles all the more extraordinary. The articles concerned are all of bamboo : the blow-pipe, quiver, and comb. This is not the place to describe the ornaments in detail ; they are very varied. The fact that the most northerly Semang, in Siam, and the most southerly, in Pahang, of which we have still to hear, do not practise ornamentation at once indicates that these cannot be original Semang. On the other hand, it is remarkable that individual tribes of Semang, chiefly the Kěnsiu, but also the Kěnta, the Sabubn, and Jahai, ornament their weapons more tastefully than the Sakai, who presumably are responsible for the introduction of ornamentation among the Semang. It has often been stated that the ornamentation has a magical character.

Actually, among the Menri and Jahai the ornaments have a purely decorative purpose, and often represent flowers. Each ornament is called simply *bunga* (flower), even when it represents something quite different, as for instance the tooth of a tiger, or something of the kind. Only the Kěnsiu and Kěnta impute a magical character to certain ornaments. But among these, too, they are as a rule entirely decorative.

If a Kěnta wishes to become a good shot with the blow-pipe, he must engrave on the weapon two definite ornaments. If the comb of a Kěnta woman is to protect her from various diseases it must show three particular ornaments.

The Kěnta maintain that their ancestor, Ta Piago, taught men to decorate the *sumpitan*, just as the Ja Tangoi have shown the women the same thing in the case of combs.

Without going into further detail may I be allowed to state that the ornamentation appears to be of foreign origin, and to have been introduced about the same time as the blow-pipe.

## IX

### THE SEMANG OF SIAM IN THE PATALUNG AND TRANG DISTRICT

**A** FURTHER task that I was anxious to carry out was that of fixing the territorial boundaries of the Semang to northward and southward. It was rumoured that Semang lived also in Siamese Malaya in the district of Patalung and Trang. It was to test the truth of this that I undertook my first journey to Siam at the beginning of 1924, before beginning my closer study of the Semang of Malaya. It was only a reconnaissance, but it took me to the sacred city of Bangkok, where I had greatest hopes of gleaning more reliable information about the haunts of the dwarfs.

The town of the Bonzen and Prachedis is most quickly and easily reached from Penang by railway. I cannot call the thirteen hundred kilometres stretch exactly enchanting. The traveller is struck by a remarkable change in the vegetation. Leaving Penang, which is set in the most luxuriant green, he travels for several hours through Kedah and the neighbouring provinces of Siam amid an equally lavish vegetation. But as one draws away from Penang, the palms which indicate the presence of kampongs grow scarcer, until finally they give place to the monotonous wilderness of the jungle, through which the line has been cut. Then this too is cut off, and the track runs through sun-scorched steppes, with islands of low brushwood which give an impression almost like Central Africa. At first there are still green rice fields to be seen, and then nothing but dry stubble until Bangkok is reached. A line might almost be drawn to indicate where the change of climate becomes noticeable.

The train moves over the plain, where dark mountains rise in the blue distance. Massive, isolated limestone rocks, from a hundred to two hundred metres high, rise out of the ground and give a strange character to the landscape. These giants tower sheer out of the plain, their white walls and sharp edges covered in every cleft and cranny with green shrub up to the very top. How long may not the sea have washed over these plains !

Near the rocks, countless water-buffalo graze, and stare in stupid astonishment after the passing train. They stretch up their necks and push out their heads until back and head form a continuous line, and gaze with their liquid eyes into the distance ; then turn towards the marsh and vanish.

I searched the density of the jungle for traces of the forest dwarfs whom I expected to find anywhere. At that time I had not yet made myself acquainted with the Semang manner of life and did not know how they shun any contact with civilization.

It is not my task to describe the beauty of Bangkok or Siamese life. I made enquiries about the dwarfs wherever I thought there was a chance of securing information. My attention was drawn to the Chong or the Porr, living in the Cardamon mountains, on the borders of Siam and Cochin-China. They are also known as Tamret or Samret. These people may have been negritos, but they have been exposed to strong influence from other nationalities with whom they certainly mix. However that may be, they cannot be included among the Semang, living as they do at such a distance.

More important to me was information I received about the Ngo in the neighbourhood of Patalung and Trang. This district is not so far removed from the Semang main stock. The Siamese reported that there were still Semang in Patalung and Trang. A Phya estimated their number at as many as three thousand, which was of course an exaggeration.

The Siamese call the Semang Ngo after a fruit which is



said to look like a curly head. These shy forest dwarfs are regarded even by the Siamese as so strange that news of them reached the Court of Bangkok, with the result that the great ruler Chulalongkorn honoured them with a visit. From the pen of the King himself we have a description of these little men, of which I will give an extract here :

“ They are of middle height, have broad noses, their lips are not too thick ; their hair is frizzy. The men leave a crown of hair standing on their heads (this must refer to the tuft I have mentioned). At least many of them do this, while the women allow their hair to grow long, though a few shave it.

The complexion is not so dark as that of the Siamese. The people are powerfully built.

Their huts are said to be tent-like (this must mean the shelters). In the rainy season they seek shelter in caves. The encampment, which is built near a stream, has an open space in the middle.

Their food consists largely of forest roots or rice (which they barter from others), fruits, and meat, particularly the flesh of apes.

They have many children and the women are said to bear a child each year.

They dread the rainy season, preferring the heat. If they have fever, they smear their faces with white colouring matter, or hang a cord round their necks.

The unmarried girls stick glass beads and flowers through the lobes of their ears, which are pierced. The women wear bamboo combs and bracelets.

When a marriage takes place the bridegroom gives the bride's father and mother a cloth, a red-coloured cloth being particularly prized.

As a weapon they use the blow-pipe, which is well made and carefully looked after. Should one of them be guilty of a crime, the chief takes away his blow-pipe, a punishment which is much dreaded. The blow-pipe is called *bolau*, the poisoned darts *gila*. A spear is also used.

Corpses are not buried. The place in which the body is laid is at once deserted from fear of spirits and tigers, which are said to eat the corpse.

They worship a deity who is the arbiter of good and evil. In the flowers dwell spirits (obviously the *chenoi*), which are of female sex and must be worshipped, otherwise they kill men, for these demons have sickle-shaped weapons with which they slit open the body to devour the entrails.

This last item certainly is incorrect as far as the *chenoi* are concerned. It refers rather to nature spirits, of which the King speaks later in his report, and in which the Ngo are said to believe. My subsequent investigations, however, showed that this belief in spirits is peculiar to the Siamese of that district, from whom the King's authorities may have obtained the information.

As the report shows, the King did not visit the negritos in their camp.

The King was pleased with these little people, an orphan boy called Kanam especially appealing to him. The King was very anxious to take this youthful dwarf with him to his Court. This, however, was not easy, for Kanam, like all the children of the forest, was timid. In the end, however, the King's will prevailed, with the result that Kanam exchanged the forest for a king's palace, his narrow strips of cloth for the rich costume of a page, and forest roots and ape-flesh for the delicate dishes of the Court. Nay more, Kanam, so Prince Damrong told me, was not treated merely as a page but as a king's son. Kanam learned the language, learned to read and write, and adopted the habits of the Court. In the end, the only difference between him and the others was his frizzy hair.

The King wrote for him an original play in which Kanam took a part, to the King's delight and his own.

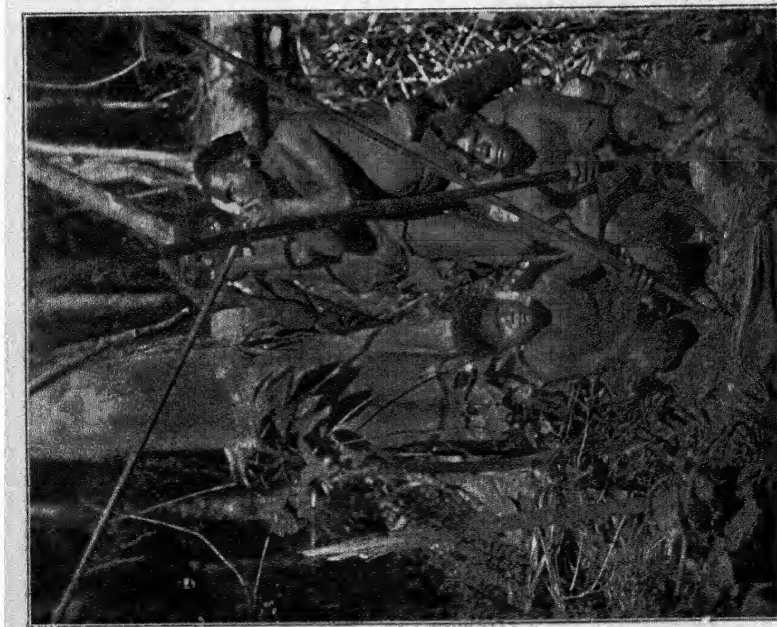
Simple and unpretentious, a true child of the forest, such was Kanam when he came to the Court of Bangkok. It is necessary to have looked into the eyes of one of these small



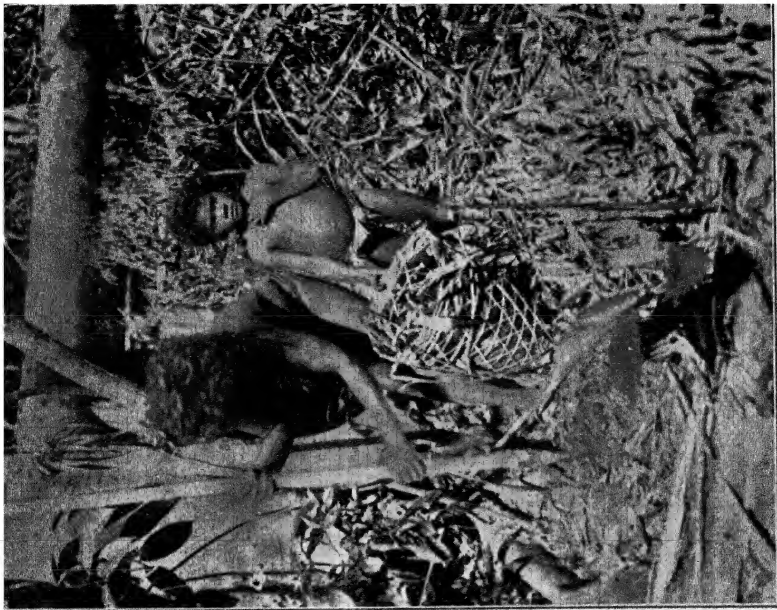
HE GRINNED AT ME AND SAID "HABIS!"



A BATEK MAN (p. 275)



BATEK WITH BLOW-PIPE TO LIPS (p. 275)



BATEK WOMAN DIGGING TUBERS (p. 275)

Semang boys to realize how deep his forest innocence is. But Kanam's nature soon changed as his new surroundings exercised their influence upon him. He became presumptuous and proud. "Write down what you want," the King once said to him. Kanam wrote: "I should like to be King, as you are." The King laughed and said: "No, Kanam, you cannot be that." This was a great disappointment for the pampered Semang boy.

Soon after the King died (1913) Kanam was sent away from the Court and himself died not long afterwards. Can this have been due to pining for the life of the Court, or for the forests of his childhood?

As the return journey took me through Patalung, I could not resist the opportunity to make the acquaintance of the curly-heads. I lived in a kind of summer-house belonging to the vice-mayor of Patalung. Unfortunately we could only understand one another very indifferently, as I was entirely ignorant of the Siamese language. However, an interpreter who knew Malay was discovered and with his help I thought I might venture to approach the Semang.

A splendid road running across the peninsula now connects Patalung on the east coast with Trang on the west. The two places are separated by the mountain chain which forms the backbone of the peninsula. These wooded heights are the lair of the Semang and thither we went early one morning in a car. Though, to begin with, the road was in good repair, it changed as soon as we reached the mountain area. Up hill and down dale the car switchbacked. On one of the gentler downward gradients, which the car was taking at a good speed, a back wheel came off and rolled away far into the forest, while the axle buried itself with a crash into the sand of the road. Fortunately no one was hurt and even the old Ford was free from mortal wounds so that we were able to patch it up again.

What astounding luck I had! In a rest hut, of which there were many on both sides of the road, we saw a band of curly-

heads. The car provided them with a great surprise as it drew up close by, and I got down and went towards them. I counted two women, two men, and two boys. The children had leapt to their feet to run away, but it was already too late. In the ensuing conversation only the men and one woman, who was the real spokesman of the group, took part.

The people struck me as markedly smaller than the Semang of the Perak. Perhaps I was deceived by the surroundings; for here I saw the people in the open, whereas in Perak they had always been in the forest. In appearance they were exactly like their cousins in the south, with whom they have no longer any association, as they are separated by a broad stretch of land inhabited by Malays. They wore much ampler clothes than the Orang-Utan of Perak. •

One of the men was carrying a blow-pipe and quiver, but neither of these was in any way ornamented. The blow-pipe they called *balau*, the dart *honlig*. The men even stated that they knew the bow, which they called *chanus*, as also the arrow used with it, *bila*. But probably they meant the bow used for shooting birds that is used by the Siamese of this district. What struck me as most strange was that one of the men understood a few Malay phrases.

As the men were anxious to move on I arranged another meeting for the following morning. I wanted them to accompany me to their encampment, which I was eager to see. This they promised to do.

While we continued our journey westward the dwarfs hurried off eastward towards Patalung. On the return journey I met them again. They were sitting in front of a Siamese kampong cooking their rice.

I was disappointed when the Semang failed to keep their promise, but I was not surprised, for I had lost some of my faith in them. They remained hidden in the forest and I turned back to Perak. For the time being I could do little in Siam as I did not know the language.

After the lapse of nine months, during which I met with

excellent success in the investigation of various Semang tribes, I again appeared in Patalung. To increase the prospects of successful investigation of the tribe there, I took with me Hempĕlabn of the Kĕnta. We had rigged him out as a Malay. His head was shaved close so that the frizziness of his hair could not be detected. A vivid red fez was placed upon it and he flaunted a brightly coloured *sarong* and *baju*. The only defect was that he looked alarmingly small for a Malay. Of his own accord he took good care always to have a cigar in his mouth. He felt in his element in the car and train, though at first these somewhat damped his loquacity.

In Patalung I introduced myself to the district governor, who was very anxious to help me, but gave me to understand that the people had become very shy since the visit of a European who had appeared four months before me.

I proceeded further into the interior and lived there in the roomy hut of a prosperous Siamese, shaded by high cocoanut palms and other fruit trees. As it was the fruit season we were abundantly supplied. Accompanied by my host, I explored the surrounding district for a considerable radius. Day after day we were on the march. Everywhere we heard news of the Ngo and in many places were even shown freshly built camps. But there was not a trace of the dwarfs themselves. It rained continuously, so that the paths were very heavy, though not so bad as the forest paths of Perak.

A solitary Siamese, who was living with the negritos, at last roused my hopes when he offered to bring the people to me. His name was Adam. On the next afternoon but one he reappeared having met with no success. He had brought three men almost up to the village when a Siamese they met told them that a white man was waiting to catch them. Like a flash they had disappeared into the forest.

Finally Adam and Hempĕlabn set out, the latter in Semang costume, to avoid frightening anybody, while I stayed at home and ate mangosteens. This attempt also proved vain.

As I was unable to do anything in the Patalung district,

I crossed the mountains to Trang. The local governor had already been informed and had quarters ready for me in Chong—a wonderfully situated summer resort, which had on several occasions been visited by the Court—and sent out men to look for the Ngo. Although the governor in Trang assured me that the people would be sure to appear, as they were very docile, his prophecy proved mistaken.

The Siamese looked in vain, though I suspect that they did not look properly but idled about somewhere in the village.

In Chong I lived in a very pleasant blockhouse. I lived in the upper story, while my three companions ate and talked on the ground floor. We represented four different nations and four different faiths: Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhist, and heathen. The last-named were worthily represented by Hempělabn. The time was not altogether lost, inasmuch as I had Hempělabn's knowledge of the Kěnta mentality at my disposal and exploited it thoroughly.

After a few days of fruitless waiting, I again made my way up the further half of the peninsula and once more searched the Patalung district. Over and over again I almost got hold of the people, but they always eluded me.

In this way a fortnight passed and, tired of the vain search, I decided to throw in my hand and depart. It was nearly Christmas and naturally I was not anxious to spend Christmas in the forest.

I had already put on my better clothes, the loads were already packed, and we were still waiting for the bearers, when a Siamese and a Chinese chauffeur came running up to say that some Ngo were waiting for me; a road surveyor had held them up on purpose. At once I set out. Unfortunately the men had escaped and I only met two women and two girls. Among these, however, was Isan, of whom I had already heard a great deal on my first journey. The Siamese declared that she held the position of a chief among the Ngo.

Now I had her before me. Hesitating and shy, her great eyes looked askance, now to right, now to left, but never at



me. She was very nervous and incurably timid. But she gradually calmed down, particularly when I had given her various presents. With the help of the interpreter I was able to obtain some important information. Isan was not a chieftain, but she enjoyed an outstanding position because she overshadowed all the others in intelligence.

An unpleasant surprise came when I saw that Hempělabn was failing me completely. In the first place, he could hardly understand the women's language, and furthermore he too was so extraordinarily timid and reserved as to be hardly of any use to me. I had to rely entirely on the interpreter. The women spoke Siamese tolerably. Their vocabulary included a few Malay words and phrases. Whether this is to be set down to association with Malays, who further south form a linguistic island, I cannot decide with certainty. It would rather seem to be a relic of earlier times when these Semang were still in contact with the main group.

When I asked Isan the name of the Ngo, she said that they were called Tonga. She called their neighbours the Mos and told me that they lived in a south-westerly direction. Hempělabn here revealed to me unexpectedly important historical connections between these Ngo and the other Semang.

Hempělabn's grandmother Menlo, it appeared, was also a Mos. During a civil war among the Siamese (?) Hempělabn's grandfather, Patogn, fled from the neighbourhood of Baling to Sělama. For the same reason the Mos had also fled from the district of Trang to Sělama. (Hempělabn said that the Kěnta know where Trang is.) After a short stay they all turned back, in all fifteen persons; only Menlo remaining behind, because he had married Patogn. Hempělabn's idea, then, was that Isan and the other so-called Tonga were also Mos, for they lived near Trang.

The name Patalung is also known to the Kěnta. It is, said Hempělabn, the name of the river, and the river is named after a negrito whom the Raja of Siam had ordered to climb a

high rock, from which he fell and was killed. He was buried in that place and the place was named Patalung after him.

Hempĕlabn further stated that at one time a road ran from Kedah to Patalung which was the haunt of water-buffaloes. This statement implies clearly that the Semang of Kedah and those from the north of Patalung and Trang were once united and that only very recently have they separated. It also explains the fact that the Tonga have preserved some relics of Malay.

Their speech resembles most that of the Kĕnsiu, and so of that group which forms the most northerly section of the negrito main stock.

Physiologically, the Tonga are a pronounced negrito type, with a childish face and broad triangular nose having a deep depression at the root. They have wide-open eyes, and fine woolly hair closely curled, are of small stature and chocolate-brown complexion. Except for the piercing of the ear-lobes, I noticed no physical mutilation among them.

Their huts are the familiar shelters, built in the same way as in the south. I must state here that the Tonga do not know or use any combs; among the six women I saw I did not notice any ornaments of this kind and none of them could tell me anything about such things, even when I showed them a genuine Semang comb. Further, the bow and arrow are no longer in use among them. Their only weapon is the blow-pipe, but this is entirely devoid of any ornament, a fact which is of very great importance in determining the origin of Semang ornamentation.

They were fairly plentifully supplied with clothes, which were worn in the Siamese fashion. I also came across many cases of flowers and grasses used as ornaments, as among the Semang of the Perak.

Although I succeeded in overcoming the shyness of the women, I could not undertake any close investigation because I did not know the language. The phonograph at first caused great consternation and it was not without extreme anxiety

that Isan sang a melody into the horn. When, however, soon afterwards, she heard her own voice emerging from the horn her delight and amazement were great. After this they lost their fear, sang a whole succession of melodies into it, and never tired of hearing their own voices reproduced ; indeed, on the following morning—we all slept under the same roof—their first glance was into the machine and their first request to hear their voices again. All four were like changed people and even declared themselves anxious to remain longer with me. When we were taking leave, a few hours later, Isan said that she was no longer afraid and would now come if I summoned her, would even come as far as Patalung to meet me.

• Naturally I cannot say much about the customs of the Tonga. Polygamy seems to be practised, and certainly separations are known. Isan had already several husbands, as also had her older companion.

The thunder god is called Kagei and lives above, whence he sends the lightning. “ Kagei is like a Moni (Semang),” said Isan.

When it thunders the Tonga are very frightened and stop up their ears. They cut their shins and scatter the blood to heaven. So in the extreme north I found that the blood ceremony obtained.

Isan also told me that in the moon the moon’s grandmother sits and looks out. She said that an eclipse of the moon throws her people into great panic and they try to help the moon by shouting and making a din.

She also gave me some noteworthy information about the Orang-Laut, from the Puket area, north of Trang. These, she said, are frizzy-haired and belong to the Semang, but closer investigation points to this being another race, for they speak a different language and have no relations with the Semang. They are also said to be less clean in their habits than the Semang.

Isan told me of a meeting with one of these Orang-Laut

who asked her to obtain a wife for him. This she refused to do. She told him that if he would go into the forest with her she would get him some *lutong* ape to eat, which he in his turn refused. She then asked him to give her some cloth, which he again refused, so the two separated empty-handed.

While I was sitting with these women and a number of Siamese in the hut, making notes, the governor of Trang came up in a car. In jest, he offered to buy Isan's child from her. How indignant the poor Semang woman was! It was plain that the offer had terrified her. How often the forest children may have been dragged in this way from the bosom of their family to amuse the Siamese or Malays! No wonder the people are to-day so extraordinarily shy and timid.

It was no easy matter to photograph and measure the people. When I touched the older woman with the measuring instrument, the sweat of terror literally stood out on her brow. Each word I spoke, she stammered after me. It was the same with the photographing. But when she saw that nothing happened to her, but that on the other hand she received a good present, she finally quietened down.

Incomplete as my observations of the most northerly group of the Semang may be, they are valuable in completing the picture of these forest dwarfs. It remains to add a few brief details of the Menri, whom I met on the Setong river, and the Batek-Nogn, in Pahang, the most southern section of the negrito, whom I met on the Krau-Cheka river.

The Menri are a quite pure negrito type, with spiral curly hair. No combs are worn among the Menri on the Nenggiri river, but they are said to be common on the Lebir, further east (as also is the ornamentation of blow-pipes and quivers), and are thought to be of foreign origin, having been adopted from the Temiar. Consequently the significance of these ornaments is unknown to them. The bow is no longer used by the Menri.

The fact that the Menri women wear no combs, while the Jahai do, has been put down to the fact that the Menri

women allow their hair to grow long so that it will hold flowers without the help of a comb, whereas the Jahai women with their short hair need the comb to fix their ornaments in it.

The camp on the Setong, in which I stayed, had a considerable plantation in the manner of their neighbours the Temiar. The huts too showed the influence of this tribe.

The Menri closely resemble the Jahai in their habits and language.

Birth, as among the Jahai, takes place within the hut. The umbilical cord is cut with a bamboo splinter, dried by the fire, placed in a small bag, and tied round the child's wrist or neck, where it is thought to protect the child's health.

The Menri maintain that polygamy is permitted among them, but is seldom practised. In the camp there was no man married to two wives, so that in practice they are monogamous. In any case they described the Temiar as people with loose habits which among themselves would be unthinkable.

Unfortunately I was without my phonograph and so could not record the songs of this tribe, which are distinguished from those of the other Semang by their peculiar melodies. The *bala* and his *serlantes* sang to the accompaniment of a bamboo zither. Particularly striking was a kind of recitative which I heard here for the first time. While singing, the *bala* and his assistant covered their heads with cloths. They have a peculiar way of making music by striking with cudgels a beam about four yards long which is hung up by both ends. They sing and dance to the rhythm of this beat, which produces a high-pitched note. As with the Jahai, only the women dance, gaily decorated with flowers and green stuff. Occasionally their faces are painted with white stripes on the forehead and spots at the corners of the mouth.

The dances of the men are of quite a different type and are very reminiscent of the dances of the Ple-Temiar.

The Menri believe that after death the soul goes to the beyond, to a place they call Chepegn. Two *halas*, Semregñ

and Buna, as keepers of the gates, admit the souls by opening a kind of trap-door. At night the souls of the dead like to return among the living; they do not, however, trust themselves where many people are together, but fall upon single persons, or two together, and kill them by dislocating their limbs. It is no rarity for a man's shadow to battle with a dead spirit, in which case the man is usually beaten.

The Menri also distinguish two grades of *bala*, the greater *bala* being called *puteu* and the lesser, *munas*. The *bala* is not buried when he dies, like the ordinary people, but the body is left exposed. The place is immediately deserted from fear of the tiger, into which the *bala* is metamorphosed.

The grave of an ordinary man is also avoided, at any rate during the first seven days after the burial, but even afterwards the grave is feared, as I was able to observe.

Belief in the Supreme Being is as distinctly evident among the Menri as among the other Semang tribes. This being is called Karei, but before he rose to heaven he was called Rinjen. He is tall and black, but can assume many forms. His wife, Takel, lives in the earth, and his son, Hanei, has become a tiger who dwells in the forest. He is the father of all *balas*.

Except for the blood ceremony no cult of the Supreme Being was to be observed. The *bala* acts as a medium between Karei and man. From time to time he throws up bright objects, such as rings, to Karei, leaping and shouting: "*Hui!*" "That is our prayer to Karei," one of them told me.

The following fable tells how the Menri discovered fire: When the Menri came into contact with the Malays, they found among them a red flower (*gantogn*: Malay, *gantang*). They gathered in a circle round this and stretched their arms out over it to warm themselves. Later, the Malays kindled fire and set fire to the *lalang* grass. The Menri fled before the fire into the forest, for of course they had no fire themselves. A stag came up to the great fire and took a brand back to his home. Being afraid that the fire would be stolen, he placed it high up on his hut while he went to work in his plantation.

The woodpecker saw the fire, stole it, and brought it to the Menri, telling them that this was fire. They must, however, be on their guard because the stag was following him. If the stag should come they were to take two spears of *tēras* and stab the stag with them. When the stag appeared to fetch his fire, two men seized the spears and stabbed the stag in the head. At that time he had no horns. Wounded in this way, the stag turned round and hurried off into the forest. Since that time he has horns but no fire.

The woodpecker also made the Menri swear that they would not kill him, since he had brought them fire for warmth and cooking. From that time the woodpecker may not be killed.

I should like to add something about the most southerly negritos in the Peninsula, the discovery of whom was a great surprise to me. During my journey to the Krau-Jakudn, near the sources of the rivers Krau and Cheka, the Jakudn told me about the dwarfs with yellow eyes. Accompanied by Batin from the Piadn river, I set out for Ulu Cheka, where I found a camp of the Batek. Strangely enough, these people call themselves Batek, which in their language means "human being," but the real name of the tribe is Nogn. Three or four other groups of them are also to be found in this neighbourhood. They are separated from the main group of negritos by the Semai and Malays. The Krau-Jakudn appear to have absorbed the majority of the Batek. I was very surprised to find that so far southward I could make myself understood fairly well by means of the Jahai language.

The few inhabitants of the camp live under weather shelters and their only domestic animal is the dog. Their weapon, the blow-pipe, bore no ornamentation, nor did the quiver. The combs I found among them were ornamented in the most rudimentary way imaginable. The Batek also use *ipoh* for poisoning their darts, but they mix it with water and boil it twice.

For clothing they still often use beaten bark, the women also wearing *tēmtobn* cords wound several times round the

loins. A piece of cloth hanging down serves to protect their modesty.

The melodies of the Batek reminded me somewhat of the songs of the Semai. Dancing is unknown among them. The Batek were the only tribe who categorically declared that a man must always live with one wife only. All enquiries I made met with this answer. Polygamy they regarded as sin (*terlaidn*), as also adultery; but the adulterer is not killed, as he is among the Menri, for the Batek maintain that they would never kill under any circumstances. Birth takes place outside the camp. A new shelter is built for the mother, the only instance of this kind among all the Semang.

I noted an extraordinary difference between the views of the Batek and those of the other Semang with regard to the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is not called Karei, but Kěto, the light, a being whose eyes are the sun and moon. Kěto is a Batek, great of stature, and black, with a long beard. He lives on high and is good. He makes rain and sunshine, the day and the night, but I was expressly told that he is not identical with the sun.

He imposes various commandments upon men. The breaking of these is called *terlaidn* or *jawaid*.

The thunder is Kěto's voice calling the sinner to atonement. Kěto is appeased by the sacrifice of the sinner's blood, drawn from near the shin-bone and scattered to heaven mixed with water, Kěto meanwhile being besought to stop the thunder because the guilt has been expiated.

Kěto drinks the offered blood and is at once appeased.

Various views we already know from other Semang tribes concerning *halas*, *chenoi*, etc., are found in the same form among the Batek.

The kingdom of the dead they call *Lembes* and, like all the other Semang, they place it in the west by the sea. There the souls of the dead live, feeding on fruits.



## X

### SUMMARY: PHYSICAL PECULIARITIES OF THE SEMANG AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR CULTURE

**I** HAVE described the Semang tribes to the reader in the order in which I made their acquaintance. To avoid repetition I have omitted in the case of the later tribes the peculiarities which had already been mentioned. The various Semang tribes agree in most of their views and customs, as they are alike physically. But we can only obtain a complete picture of the culture of the Semang as a whole by fitting together the individual pieces of the mosaic. Serious gaps which would remain in the case of individual tribes can in this way be filled, because facts observed among other tribes fit quite naturally into them.

The Semang are true dwarf tribes, for their average height is, in the case of women, 140 centimetres and of men 150 centimetres. They are both dolichocephalic and brachycephalic, and therefore a strong admixture of the blood of various nationalities may be assumed. In many physical characteristics the Semang bear a strong resemblance to the natives of Australia.

Their complexion is dark brown, with a tendency to black. Their hair is either like the woolly hair of the African or curls in fine spirals like the hair of the Papuans.

A certain childlike expression of face is not rare among them. Receding foreheads and thick eyebrows I noticed only on few occasions. The forehead is mostly vertical, though low.

The nose is generally very broad, and frequently has a deep depression at the root; it is triangular in shape. The eyes

are big and wide-open and the iris is usually of a reddish yellow colour. The lower part of the face is protruding, but the cheek-bones are not prominent, the face being rather rounded in form.

Of squat, ill-proportioned figure, the Semang is very different in this respect from the slenderly built Sakai. The trunk looks short and powerful, and is supported by long legs. The shoulders are broad and the arms long, and the hands are well formed, though the feet look clumsy owing to the outward bend of the big toe.

They have an extraordinarily weak growth of beard. I did not see a single case of hair on the chest.

As for physical disfigurement, piercing of the ear-lobes is universal among the women, and individual tribes file the incisor teeth.

Tattooing and piercing of the nasal septum, where they were to be observed at all among the frontier tribes, have certainly been adopted from the neighbouring Sakai.

Painting of the body occurs extremely rarely and also points to Sakai influence, while personal decoration with flowers and greenstuff is native to the Semang.

The Semang has a strangely contented nature which defies the worst moods of the climate. He still stands to-day at what may be called the gathering stage. Though it is chiefly the woman who goes out in search of plants for food while the man hunts, it would be wrong to suppose that the man never gathers plants. The men often do this work, while the women occasionally fish but never hunt.

The principal food of the Semang consists of vegetables, not meat. Hunting, therefore, is not the main source of food or the main activity of the Semang; consequently the woman contributes the greater part towards the maintenance of the family, for she goes regularly every day in search of plants.

Many Semang groups have begun the laying out of small plantations, which, however, are far from adequate to support the people permanently.

The native Semang weapon is the bow with a bast thong and poisoned arrow, but this weapon is to-day almost obsolete ; it has been replaced by the blow-pipe, which has been borrowed from the Sakai.

As a natural result of their nomadic life in the forest, the Semang have no permanent buildings. They erect their weather shelters wherever they settle for a few days.

All their other equipment, which I will not enumerate here, is of bamboo, for which reason I say that the Semang is living in the bamboo period. Stone implements of any kind are completely lacking. The only iron implements, and these have been introduced by the Malays, are bush-knives and rattan splitters.

As I have already explained in detail, the Semang cannot live together except in small groups, as it is impossible for the forest to feed large masses of human beings. We therefore find them living in family groups without any strict tribal organization. Freedom, but not licence, is the principle of every Semang group and the characteristic of each individual. The only laws they know are the commandments of the Supreme Being. There are no commands emanating from the seniors, as each individual controls his own life. Therefore the individual camps have no recognized rulers. In each family the father alone is a respected person and the owner has sole control of any property.

Each Semang group has its tribal area, which is known by the *durian* and *ipoh* trees to which the individual families of the group have a right. Although they may wander over all the territory of the tribe, a group always returns to its home in the narrower sense.

Marriage is based on equality of rights between man and woman ; both enjoy complete freedom and equal rights which are observed upon the contraction of a marriage, during the whole time it lasts, and also after separation.

A married pair are bound together by genuine affection. If this is lacking, especially at the outset, the marriage is

dissolved and the pair are free to contract another marriage. Children are universally very highly treasured and it is they who link the married pair together, usually for life; for, while young marriages are more frequently dissolved, this rarely happens after the birth of a child.

The Semang are characterized by great personal cleanliness, which perhaps is best accounted for by their extraordinarily hard mode of life. Different tribes hold strictly to constancy before marriage, while with others freer views obtain in this respect.

Adultery is everywhere regarded as the most serious crime, and was at one time always punished with death. Polygamy is permitted among the Semang, but in practice very rarely occurs and must be regarded as exceptional. Murder, theft, and drunkenness are unknown crimes. The Semang is not aggressive or cruel, but, on the contrary, very shy and timid towards strangers. If he thinks himself threatened, he is inclined to untruthfulness.

The same religious views unite all the dwarfs of Malaya and are to be found among all tribes.

They believe in a Supreme Being, the thunder god. When we survey the material and attempt to unravel the tangle of views, we find that the Supreme Being was originally called Ta Pedn or Kedo. He is the thunderer. His personal characteristics have gradually passed to the natural phenomenon itself, the thunder, so that in certain tribes, especially those running from north to south, the thunder Kaei, or Karei, becomes a personal being, whereas the original deity appears sometimes as his brother, sometimes as his son, but everywhere is associated with the creation as the creator, a clear sign and relic of his former position.

Around the thunder god are grouped a number of other myths and views which vary according to the tribe. The following, however, are common to all: the wife of the thunder god, named Manoid or Takel, who lives in the earth; and, secondly, the strange blood ceremony, which

can only be regarded as sin expiation. On this second point the complete unanimity from furthest north to furthest south is surprising.

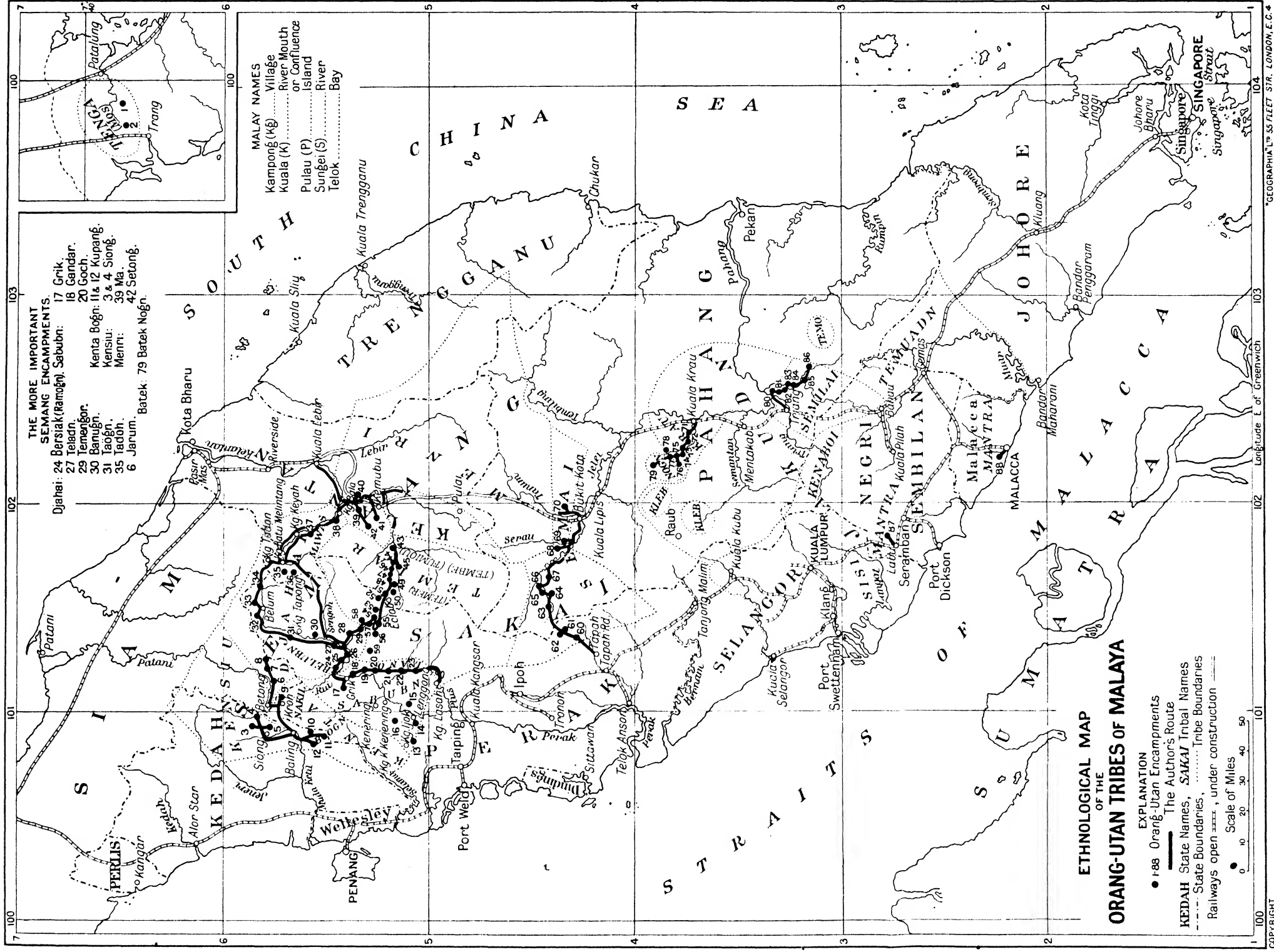
All tribes likewise believe in the *chenoi*, small bright spirits, or elves, who live particularly in flowers and are well disposed towards men. They represent the poetic side of the Semang religious views. Most of their songs are concerned with the flower ornaments of which the Semang is so fond.

In close connection with *chenoi* stands the *bala* or priest-medicine-man, who is also the intermediary between the deity and man. He alone can establish contact between the two parties, for he alone can pray to the deity. He is the son of the deity, a tiger.

• There can be no doubt that the ornamentation of combs, blow-pipes and quivers is in some way connected with the *chenoi* and the love of the Semang for flowers.

All Semang believe in a life after death. The land of the dead lies in the west, in an island in the sea. Thither all the dead come with the exception of the *balas*. In the land of the dead people lead a spirit life and live just as they do on earth. Reward and judgment after death are unknown to the Semang. All evil must be expiated on earth and the deity sees that this is done.









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## NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION

1. In Semang words the accent is on the final syllable.
2. Final *n* in Semang words (in such combinations as *gn*, *dn*) is a light nasal aftersound.
3. The final vowel of Semang words is short (glottal stop).















